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Wala nang lolokl, ani GMA. Tamang desisyon o mali?

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Angara asked GMA for job, says Lacson

By Christine O. Avendaño

No way out for Garcia

GMA orders turnover of ex-AFP comptroller to Sandiganbayan

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

MAJ. GEN. Carlos Garcia will be surrendered to a civilian court and if he fails himself out, he will be put back in military detention.

Apparently shaming the secret business and to the applause of the country's top Chinese-Filipino businessmen, President Macapagal-Arroyo last night made it clear that the embattled former military comptroller would not enjoy even temporary liberty while charges against him in connection with P142-million in unexplained wealth were being pursued.

"I have instructed the chief of staff of the Armed Forces to surrender Gen. Carlos Garcia to the Sandiganbayan," Ms. Arroyo said in a speech at the retirement celebration of the Philippine-Chinese General Chamber of Commerce at the Manila Hotel.

Her audience broke into applause.

Interrupting the applause, Ms. Arroyo added: "But because his successor for arson in the Fertilizer Fund scandal, Jose Pidal, is already in detention in his bailable offenses. I've also instructed that once he hails himself out of the civilian jail, he must be returned to military detention."

She got more applause.

Ms. Arroyo's clear ended the tug-of-war for Garcia between the Sandiganbayan, which had issued a warrant for his arrest on perjury charges, and the general court-martial, which is in up the former AFP comptroller for violation of the Articles of War.

The charges stemmed from Garcia's alleged unexplained wealth.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez stepped into the controversy over who had primary jurisdiction over Garcia by ruling on the law. Incidentally (the military) investigators to recommend on the charges against Garcia, the former chief of double jeopardy. (See related stories on Page A2.)

Ms. Arroyo initially upheld the military's jurisdiction over Garcia, saying he would rather be tried under circumstances while facing a court-martial, unlike the civilian jail. But if the Sandiganbayan should first catch up him.

Armed Commanders had urged Ms. Arroyo to order the surrender of Garcia to the Sandiganbayan, saying that the military would be able to protect him from any harm.

IT TOOK 16 men to carry the gargantuan megamouth shark that weighed a ton in Bohol.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY

Shark tales in RP: The good, the bad

By Volt Contreras

PESET: the good news: The Philippines was named the "Best Place for an Animal Encounter" in Time magazine's special report on The Best of Asia.

The guide, included in the Nov. 20 issue of Time, has categories like the best place to chill out, the best beach, the best place to get lunch outside of Japan, and so forth.

According to Time, the best place to go to know an animal up close is Donsol, Sorsogon, said the activity is called swimming with the whale sharks.

Time wrote: "Under carefully regulated conditions, which forbid touching the sharks, flash photography and the use of any equipment except tools, snorkel and mask, you can swim with these magnificent giants. It costs just over $50 for a permit, boat and guide, and while one hesitates to use the phrase 'a whole of a time,' that's exactly what you'll have."

And now the bad news: Residents of a remote Iloilo village nearly had for their dinner a one-ton shark, considered the rarest in the world.

But environmentalist group yesterday reported that it was the arrival of a fisheries official on the scene, locals said, while one hesitates to use the phrase 'a whole of a time,' that's exactly what you'll have."

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RP to lead antiterror task force of Apec

AFTER from a friendly phone call from US President George W. Bush, President Macapagal-Arroyo has one more thing to be proud of when she joins the leaders of 21 member-economies of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) in Chile this weekend.

She said the Philippines was elected chair of Apec's Counter-Terrorism Task Force.

"The Philippines of 21 member economies of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation to elect the Philippines as head of Apec's Counter-Terrorism Task Force of forms the trust and confidence of the international community in our sincere efforts to fight terrorism," Ms. Arroyo said in a statement.

"The election of the Philippines to lead the task force was ironic as it had been dropped from the US-led "Coalition of the Willing" that invaded and occupied Iraq.

Ms. Arroyo had admitted that the country was no longer part of the coalition because its members were those who had soldiers in Iraq.

She pulled out the small Philippine contingent from Iraq in July in response to demands of Iraq militants who had threatened to execute one Filipino truck driver Angelo de la Cruz.

DANTE ANG

Ex-GMA publicist bags Subic deal

By Tony S. Bergonia

A FORMER publicist of President Macapagal-Arroyo unwittingly says, has landed a contract to develop a 1.5-hectare property inside the Subic Freeport Zone at a monthly rent of P15 per square meter, according to documents obtained by the Inquirer.

But Dante Ang said he was unexploiting the project amid suspicions that the contract was a sweetheart deal.

"Subsequent events have forced us to reevaluate our Subic project," said Ang, in an Oct. 26 letter to Alfredo Antonio, recently appointed administrator of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA).

"We have decided to suspend work until after the midterm elections are settled," Ang said in his letter. "I want to make sure that [the] SBMA, the school and myself are freed from suspicion of entering into a sweetheart contract."

Neither other country, the Manila Times School of Journalism was not rewarded any tax incentives and privileges," he wrote.

The documents said Ang, using his Manila Times School of Journalism,

SENDOFF TO HAITI
A member of the 28-man Philippine military contingent serving as advance party of the force's headquarters support unit is escorted by his son as he departs for a United Nations peace mission in Haiti.

Trauma afflicts returning GIs, study reveals

LOS ANGELES — One in six American soldiers returning from Iraq is suffering from psychological trauma, and the problem is likely to get worse as more troops return from longer tours, the Los Angeles Times reported Saturday.

A study by a US Army research institute found that 15.6 percent of Marines and 17.1 percent of soldiers surveyed after they returned from Iraq suffered major depression, generalized anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder, the Times said.

The disorder, formally identified by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980, is a debilitating change in the brain's chemistry that can include sleep disorders, panic attacks, violent outbursts and acute anxiety, among other symptoms.

More than 30 percent of US veterans of the Vietnam War were afflicted, plunging many of them into homelessness, addiction,

Nayan abductors set new deadline to reach agreement

KABUL, Afghanistan — Taliban-linked militants threatening to kill three UN hostages gave the Afghan government until Monday night to reach a deal for their release, while Afghan officials said negotiations had been postponed amid disagreements over ransom demands.

Philippine diplomat Angelito Venzi, British Irish Sameera Flanigan and Bojar Habibi of Western were seized at gunpoint on Oct. 28—the first abductions of foreigners in the capital since the fall of the Taliban three years ago.

The purported leader of Amin-ul Haq Imtiaz, which is seeking the release of 26 militants in exchange for the trio, told The Associated Press that the new deadline for an agreement was 10 p.m. (1730 GMT) Monday.

"If anything happens to the hostages, the Afghan government will be directly responsible," Mohammad Akbar Agha said in a telephone call from an undisclosed location. "Our deadline is 10 p.m. tonight."

However, an Afghan government official said the talks were suspended until after the three-day Islamic Eid al-Fitr feast, which ends in Afghanistan on Monday.

"There has been no agreement and the main sticking point is money," the official said on condition of anonymity. He didn't say when the talks, which are being carried out through intermediaries, would resume.

Jacob al-Muslimeen, or Army of Muslims, has claimed that the US must 11 months it wants freed are in US custody, but the American military says it will release no one and has vowed to be tracked by the militants.

US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage also opposed any concessions on a visit to Kabul last week.

Despite the claims of the militants, who had already set a string of deadlines, it remained unclear how much control they had over the hostages.

In Manila, the Department of Foreign Affairs said the the new deadline set by the kidnappers and Philippine Foreign Undersecretary Jose Brillantes and ambassador Jorge Arrizabal from

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2004

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Corruption main enemy, says Abu

THE NEW armed forces chief says corruption is the main scourge of a demoralized and ill-equipped military trying to win back public confidence and fight several insurgencies.

Lt. Gen. Efren Abu also told Reuters he ordered field commanders to support peace talks with Muslim rebels that are due to resume this year in neighboring Malaysia.

The military, the source of 14 coup attempts since 1986, is about to put its reform on test.

In new hearings on Tuesday, separate tribunals will hear the cases of young officers who led a brief mutiny in July 2003 most of Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, a former army finance chief accused of amassing up to $12 million in graft and profiteering.

'One of us'

"We don't want corruption to erode the strength of the armed forces," Abu, a United States-trained army officer, said in an interview. "General Garcia is one of us, and if it will be proven that he [did it] as charged, he goes to jail."

Several graft cases have involved senior officers, but Garcia's is the first to reach the courts.

Abu, an infantryman who flies Cessna planes, took over as the armed forces' chief of staff from Narciso Abaya on the 1st but is due to retire next June.

Yudhoyono's classmate

As a classmate of Indonesia's new president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, at a commanders' course in Fort Leavenworth in the US, Abu said there could be lessons he could help summarize efforts and the peace negotiations.

ABU: Western mass corruption is eroding the strength of the armed forces.

soldiers who joined the pursuit of rebels in taking over a luxury apartment tower for about 22 hours last year. The soldiers are exposed to be jailed and demoted.

Harsher scrutiny

Garcia is facing harsher scrutiny as the government moves to clamp down on corruption across the public service and the military under Abu's direction is working to clean up how it handles equipment and money.

Scrapping to win his people Roman Catholic country are ethnic clashes and communist rebels, as well as militants from the regional network Jemaah Islamiyah (JI).

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Yudhoyono's classmate

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"We can talk just like friends," he said. "We can cooperate to the fight against terrorism." Abu said he did not believe the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the largest Muslim rebel group, had officials ties to JI, although local officials in the group's stronghold in Mindanao in the south have connections with the MILF.

"We think that links existed when the peace talks started," he said, adding the presence of 80 Guerrero members from Malaysia and Indonesia convinced the MILF.

"We think the peace talks to succeed."

Reuters

Magdalo rebels, Garcia face court-martial today

By Ahniel Paga

THE MILITARY justice system will be under scrutiny today as it begins the courts-martial of a cracking officer accused of amassing unexplained wealth and junior officers and soldiers charged with mutiny.

This morning, the junior officers and soldiers calling themselves the Magdalo group and rebels seeking exemption from prosecution will face lower court martial for the 2003 mutiny and they respectively Marine Col. to be heard.

In the afternoon, former Armed Forces of the Philippines comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia will face a panel of his peers who will try him on charges of corruption. He is accused of accumulating wealth and properties that he did not declare in his Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Networth (SALN).

The Magdalo group and Garcia are charged with violating article of War 96 for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman and Article of War 97 for disorder and neglect prejudicial to good order and military discipline.

Garcia, however, will have to appear at the Sandiganbayan, the anti-graft court in the morning to answer to four counts of perjury for lying in his SALN.

Garcia may not be the highest ranking officer of the AFP to face court martial. He is the first senior officer pending his trials.

The Magdalo soldiers numbering some 276, on the other hand, were detained in a military camp right after their daredevil mutiny, which they staged to protest corruption in the military.

Lawyers for the Magdalo soldiers had delayed the proceedings under the Supreme Court's decision to refer jurisdiction over their case.

The high court finally ruled that the tribunals of the Magdalo soldiers were "service-related," and thus still under the jurisdiction of the military court.

After the Supreme Court decision, Magdalo Senator Rodolfo Palaka said they would face the charges squarely and would not use technical defense in the proceedings.

The Magdalo group was led by Navy Lt.(sg) Antonio Trillanes IV and Army Capts. Gerardo Gambala and Milo Maestrecampo.

On the other hand, Garcia's case exploded in the front pages last month after one of his associates caught at the San Francisco, California, airport last December trying to smuggle in $100,000 in cash.

The AFP leadership found out about the incident only in February. Following a preliminary investigation, Brig. Gen. Cesar Ildefonso Santos directed the comptrollership to place and progress.

Get your act together, DOJ tells Ombudsman, AFP probers

By Philip C. Tubeza

GET TOGETHER

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday called on the Ombudsman and military investigators to coordinate on the charges they would be filing against Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia to avoid the possibility of double prosecution and forum shopping.

At the same time, Gonzalez issued divergent suggestions from congressmen to have the Bureau of Internal Revenue help in investigation by gathering evidence in a plunder case against Garcia, the former comptroller of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Gonzalez said the Ombudsman's special prosecutor and the AFP's Judge Advocate general "should talk" to avoid any duplication of charges against Garcia, who is suspected of amassing millions in ill-gotten wealth.

"You cannot file the same case in both civil and military courts. That would not just be double jeopardy, it would also be forum shopping," Gonzalez said.

Ombudsman Special Prosecutor Jesus Flores and Deputy Judge Advocate General Lt. Col. Jesus Pedro Balauag Jr. met with Gonzalez yesterday to discuss the possible charges against Garcia.

Gonzalez said Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo should be briefed by the civilian court.

Gonzalez issued these suggestions after Rep. Edcel Lagman and Vincent Garcia filed urged the BIR and the Commission on Audit to join the investigation after learning that the only evidence against Garcia so far was the affidavit of his wife in which she had detailed the amounts allegedly given by military suppliers and contractors to her husband.

Lagman noted that the officials would not stand up in court because the law says a spouse cannot testify against the other spouse.

Gonzalez, however, said the government had other evidence against Garcia.

He said these included the discrepancies between Garcia's Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth and the actual assets that he had.

MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION (MCLE) FOR LAWYERS

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November 20 & 27 and December 4 & 11, 2004

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Venue/Date (see Roster Above)	(MCLE Subject)	Units / Hrs.	Subject Classification and Time and MCLE Credit Units (CU)	Lecturers
			Legal Writing - 9:00 am (CU)	Justice Hugo E. Gutierrez, Jr.
			MCLE Compliance and Administration - 10:30 am - 12:45 pm (CU)	Prof. Harry C. Roque, Jr.
			Updates in Legal Ethics - 1:45 pm (CU)	Justice Hector L. Hofilena
			Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Arbitration - 3:15 pm - 4:30 pm (CU)	Justice Reynato S. Puno
			Constitutional Protections & Disappearings - 4:45 pm - 6:00 pm (CU)	Justice Reginaldo S. Sison
			Global Legal Issues - 9:00 am (CU)	Justice Magdangal M. De Leon
			International Law - 10:30 am - 12:45 pm (CU)	Atty. Rodolfo P. Ledesma
			Taxation on Individuals - 1:45 pm (CU)	Justice Oswaldo D. Pineda
			Taxation on Individuals & Practice Law - 3:15 pm - 6:00 pm (CU)	Justice Reginaldo S. Sison
			Commercial Law - 9:00 am (CU)	Dean Fe Vincent S. Alinea
			Practical Skills - 10:30 am - 12:45 pm (CU)	Justice Noel G. Tijam
			Trial Techniques - 1:45 pm (CU)	Justice Edilberto G. Sandoval
			International & Domestic Arbitration - 3:15 pm - 6:15 pm (CU)	Dean Custodio O. Parlade
			Administrative Law & Agrarian Law - 9:00 am (CU)	Prof. Sheila C. Valdehueza
			Intellectual Property Rights Law - 10:30 am - 12:45 pm (CU)	Atty. Jose John C. Uy
			Practice Before Local Units - 1:45 pm (CU)	Justice Ruben T. Reyes
			Updates in Labor Law - 3:15 pm - 6:15 pm (CU)	Hon. Josephine D. Jimenez

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Venue: Multicrowd, Iloilo Golf Country Club Double PSC Complex (formerly 21 PAG).

Lunch Menu: Asian Meals (No Agung Pangsit), Native Meals

Incentives: Blank drawing or attendance awards for half day sessions plus lunch for whole day sessions. Hand-outs, Certificate of Attendance & Certificate of Participation, Souvenir Bags, FREE PARKING, Free Snacks, Coffee and candies. Free subscription of the Attorney's Compliance Report and submission to the MCLE Office.

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FORTHCOMING SEMINAR

The 6th 2004 MCLE Lecture Series will be held at DAP IPIL/MANILA CITY, PAMPANGA for four (4) consecutive saturdays on December 7, 8, 9 & 10, 2004.

Translate Koran to Filipino, Kudarat governor proposes

By Mail D. Mendoza
INQ Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—Sultan Kudarat Gov. Pax Mangudadatu wants to have the Koran translated to Filipino from the Arabic language to help bring the issues in dispute to the fore and to promote a better understanding of Islam and the Muslim culture.

Mangudadatu said he proposed translating the Koran, the Muslim Holy Book, to Filipino during the recent Hadaj Darjat (Malaysia World) convention in Datu Sampuan, Malaysia, in which he was elected vice president.

Mangudadatu said religious and cultural based animosity was partly to blame for the lack of understanding of the Islamic religion and culture, even among Muslims themselves.

He said local and foreign Muslim organizations could provide scholarships to individuals, scholar linguists or ulamas (scholars) to do the translation.

The Koran is widely available in English and other languages.

In fact, a Bikolano ulama (scholar), Hadja Gulam Sarajan, was the first Muslim Filipina to translate the book into English. His work was the third of only seven accredited English translations by Muslim Arabic language experts from all over the world.

But there has not been any official translation into any of the 13 dialects spoken by the country's Muslims since ideas was introduced in Iloilo in 1380, although a Cebuano version by Ruth Rasul Mercado has been available since 1999.

Mr. Mangudadatu's idea might not be

Your, I want to attend the: ___ entire 36 credit unit seminar; ___ per half day session.

Name of Participant: _____ Roll No.: _____

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Company/Office: _____ IBP Chapter: _____

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Malaysian deputy PM to visit South

KUALA LUMPUR: Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak is expected to arrive today for a three-day visit to Mindanao where a Malaysian facilitation is monitoring a truce between government forces and Muslim separatists, officials said yesterday.

They said Najib, during his trip to the south, would meet the members as well as President Macapagal-Arroyo's top aides, including Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. and chief government negotiator Teresita Deles.

Najib is also the defense minister of Malaysia, which last agreed to host the next round of talks between Manila and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) soon.

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Najib is also the defense minister of Malaysia, which last agreed to host the next round of talks between Manila and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) soon.

The MILF has been waging a rebellion since 1978 for the creation of an Islamic state in the mineral-rich southern island of Mindanao. It signed a truce with Manila two years ago, but sporadic clashes still occur between the rebels.

AFP

RP now world's 2nd largest migrant-sending country

THEY SEE the world's ocean, troop the floors of the rising Asian middle class and launder clothes for US troops fighting in Iraq.

Yet while providing a massive boost to the consumption-led economic growth in the Philippines, the billions of dollars that millions of overseas Filipinos send home do little to ease long-term poverty in the country, according to an Asian Development Bank study.

The money that workers and immigrants send home each year is spent mainly on food, daughters' tuition and uniforms through school, while the rest is blown on land and village fiestas as well as ill-advised small business ventures that usually fail, according to the study.

Worldwide, the failed yet "lavavings" (dis-remittances, estimated at between $7.6 billion to double that figure every year, is primarily developmental institutions, it added.

With nearly a million Filipinos leaving every year, the Philippines is the world's second largest migrant-sending country after Mexico, and the third largest remittance-receiving country after Mexico and India.

The labor export program, launched by president Ferdinand Marcos during the Mideast oil boom in the 1970s, now sees 7.5 million out of a population of 84 million living or working abroad.

This includes more than a quarter-million seafarers, though more than 60 percent of those who left the country are women.

The modern-day diaspora is seen of the world includes about 6,000 working for US contractors in Iraq, hundreds of thousands of maids in Asia and the Middle East, and nurses in western countries.

There are 3.33 million permanent Filipino residents, temporary workers or illegals in North America, who remitted more than half of the $7.61 billion officially listed as sent to the Philippines in 2003.

Total remittance flows are expected to reach or exceed $8.1 billion this year, Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said last month.

The money accounts for 16 percent of current account receipts ... and is equal to 11 percent of the gross domestic product ... of a country where half the population lives on two dollars a day.

"With formal flows at the level of seven billion dollars (early, and actual flows estimated at double that figure), there is a tremendous potential for harnessing these remittance flows for more productive use and as a tool for poverty reduction," the study said.

Manila's challenge "lies in addressing the various regulatory and practical barriers and gaps" to tapping these fund flows for development, the study said.

Drawn by decades of high-earning remittances, banks and financial institutions in rural areas and lack of "financial literacy" of migrants and family members.

The study, believed to be the first of its kind in the Philippines, cited "extensive anecdotal evidence suggesting considerable spending for non-essentials and luxuries" by recipient families.

Relatives who neither have the proper business attitude or appreciation for the hard-earned income, are asked to manage small enterprises which eventually fail." As the end of their temporary contracts, many workers experience severe economic misappropriation problems and "may emerge they may have brought home are totally exhausted" — especially if they cannot find a new job. AFP

FILIPINO domestic helpers rest at the Statue Square in Hong Kong on Sunday, their day off. An Asian Development Bank study said the billions of dollars that millions of overseas Filipinos send home do little to ease long-term poverty in the country. AFP PHOTO

FISHERMEN boats are safe on shore in the coastal town of Garchitorena, Camarines Sur, early Monday morning. Storm Signal No. 1 has been hoisted over the province which lies directly in the path of storm "Unding." REYNALDO

Storm signals up as 'Unding' heads for Bicol

By Yuli Cuizon

TROPICAL storm "Unding" (International name Winde) has accelerated and maintained its threat over the Bicol region and parts of Southern Tagalog and the Visayas, the weather bureau said yesterday.

As of early last night, Storm Signal No. 1 was in effect over Batangas, Albay including Batan Islands, Catanduanes, the Camarines provinces, the southern areas of Quezon, and Masbate and Northern Samar. Water and air travel were declared risky in these areas.

Over 1,000 passengers were stranded yesterday in Bicol after all trips of sea vessels were cancelled because of Unding. More than 100 vehicles were also unable to leave port.

Most of the stranded passengers, numbering 450, were in Tabaco town. Four trucks, five cars and two sea vessels were also held there.

Some 374 passengers were stranded in Matnog along with 78 cars, nine buses and three vessels.

Some 350 people were stranded in Pilar, while 20 passengers and two sea vessels were unable to leave Gubatan. Twenty-eight people were stranded in Bulan.

Philippine Coast Guard spokesperson Lt. Armand Balilo said the passengers and vehicles would only be allowed to leave once the weather stabilized.

Signal No. 1 was raised over Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Mindoro, the rest of Quezon including Polillo Island, and Western Samar including Biliran Island.

Unding increased its speed from 13 kph on Sunday to 35 kph as midday yesterday, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

By nightfall, though, it had slowed to 7 kph, Pagasa said.

It was projected to move west northwest, approaching the middle section of the Philippine archipelago. Its center may hit land this morning, beginning with Albay and be nearest to Metro Manila tomorrow. With Lydia B. Saberon in

Error-filled book in private schools worries DepEd

By Doris Z. Rosalinda

THE DEPARTMENT of Education would hesitate to replace 1.2 [illegible] lists copies of the erroneous history textbook in public schools, but not the copies circulated in private schools.

Education Secretary Florencio Abad said his hands were tied in so far as regulating the kind of textbooks used in private schools.

DepEd offered instead to assess the corrected copy of the history textbook.

"If they [private schools] want to, they can adopt the [author's] material. We'll allow them to use it," Abad said.

The DepEd has asked 22 historians to examine the 324-page "Saya: Mitos, Higanyo at sa Hinaharap," after confirming the complaint of Ateneo School executive secretary Gabriel Go that the book was riddled with grave errors.

The textbook is published by SD Publications and authored by Dr. Rodolfo Pena, Avelina Villoria, Noah Pomeroy and the late Bienvenido Quiray.

Second year high school students in public schools have been using the book for the last seven years at least. Private schools have used the textbook for far longer than that.

The Federation of Association of Private School Administrators (Fapsa) president Florencio Ranking said many of their members had used the "Saya" textbook as well as other textbooks by the same publishers.

Ranking's school, St. Nicholas School of Marikina, has a three-year contract to purchase textbooks only from Filsil Publishing Inc.(the company of SD Publications) until next year.

Ranking said they were worried because they would have to use the "Saya" textbooks until the end of the year since they did not have a replacement book.

Abad said the DepEd would work with private schools in the area of textbook procurement "once we come up with textbooks that we can confidently say are error-free."

"We can't tell them (private school officials) what to do but we can advise them," he added.

Private schools are left on their own to purchase textbooks. There is no government body regulating the production of textbooks.

The Book Publishing Industry Development Act (or Republic Act 8047) of 1995 left the production of textbooks up to private publishers.

Alarmed by Go's report, professors from various universities, namely the University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila, La Salle and the Philippine Normal University, as well as members of the National Historical Institute have volunteered to review the rest of public school textbooks.

Go has said he found several errors in the third year high school history textbook "Kasaysayan ng Daigdig" also by SD Publications, as well as in the first and second year high school textbook "Science and Technology for the Modern World" by Dina Ocheda Perez.

Correction

[illegible] the story "Controversy in Wine Café" by Grace C. Alfonso, published on Page A20 on Nov. 14, the fifth line of the fourth paragraph should have read "... Filipino guerrillas who fought American occupation forces during the Philippine-American war..."

...

Readers may send their comments or corrections of factual errors in writing to Fax No. 896-6090, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, 5 Chino Roces Avenue corner Ellipsoide Street, Makati City. Fax this: (632) 719-0344, e-mail: [illegible]

TROUBLE in paradise. Husband and wife Divina Alejandro and Joseph Torres Cola, at left, pick papayas from their farm inside a disputed property in Sitio Magsaysay, Barrio, Rizal. Above, the two view the land they have planted with fruit trees, vegetables, rice and corn. They now stand to lose this piece of land as two powerful groups in search of gold fight for possession of the property. —ALEC L. CASTAÑEDA

General, Sumulong kin locked in battle over 'gold treasure' in quiet Rizal town

By Christian V. Esguerra

IN A QUIET town in Rizal province, unsuspecting villagers and a member of a powerful political clan are locked in a raging dispute over ownership of a vast of land believed to hold buried gold.

Wilfredo Enriquez Torres is claiming ownership of a 38-hectare property in Barangay Pinagsanjan in Baras town.

Brig. Gen. Jose V. Campo allegedly forced the property to keep out anyone who may be after the gold, if it did exist.

Campo is the assistant deputy chief of staff for capability, material and technology development (J6) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Torres claims his mother was a cousin of Francisco Sumulong, a senator and leading politician in his time.

In a joint affidavit, Campo's wife Evelina and a certain Rodgin Manlangit claimed ownership of eight of the disputed 38 hectares, the eight in which the treasure is reportedly buried. Their ownership was attested to by Baud's provincial assessor.

"We have been filing the land audited some improvements since 1986," they said in the affidavit.

Police hands off

Local police are keeping their hands off as they won't be used by either party, according to Senior Supt. Leonardo Santiago, Rizal provincial police chief.

Torres said the promise of gold lusted in the eight-hectare portion of Pinagsanjan brought him and Campo together in 2001. That year they signed a memorandum of agreement to jointly pursue the alleged treasure, with Campo putting P3 percent of the find and Torres 20.

Quoting Campo, Torres said the effort involved several other military generals keen on "recovering" the gold.

Marcos gold?

"Marcos owned the gold which he inherited from (several years) before his fall in 1986," Torres told the Inquirer in an interview. "So early as 1976, I already knew there was precious metals there."

Two years later, Torres said he donated the 38 hectares, including the eight-hectare treasure site, to Zentel Foundation Inc. which is headed by American James Yousll and his Filipino wife, Marilyn Ita, the daughter of his former property custodian.

The trouble began in August this year when Campo allegedly ordered the houses of Jessie's workers demolished and he fenced the excavation site. The following month, he allegedly began forcing the entire 38-hectare property.

Forced off

Santiago said the area was "fenced" to keep squatters out and this was now the subject of a civil case involving Torres.

Torres is also allegedly the subject of a police investigation over charges of land-grabbing involving huge tracts of land in Quezon, Bulacan and Rizal, according to Santiago.

Torres filed charges of trespassing, violation of domicile, illegal demolition, robbery grave coercion and abuse of authority against Campo in the Office of the Ombudsman.

Yousll filed a separate complaint against Campo with the ad[illegible] premises in September 2004.

General unavailable

The Inquirer called Campo's office at Camp Aguinaldo several times but was always told the general was unavailable.

Yousll said the Ombudsman dismissed Torres' complaint, citing lack of evidence, but "we [have] perfect titles" to the rest of the area. He claimed the present squatter failed to act on his own complaint.

Santiago said digging for gold in the area had been going on for the last 30 years or so, definitely long before the 2001 agreement between Torres and Campo.

Satellite photos

There was even a time Malacañang asked local authorities to verify the authenticity of US satellite photos showing gold beneath the property, he said.

"I verified with the US Embassy and was told there was no such treasure there," Santiago told the Inquirer. "It appears the parties disputing the property were claiming the presence of gold there just to lure investors."

Last Oct. 15, Campo, allegedly backed by heavily armed men dressed in military and police uniforms, barged onto the disputed property and ordered what was left of the occupants there, Yousll said.

'This is terrorism'

"This is one month, he told the Inquirer.

Eye-[illegible] 20 families but their business. Another 30 families are set to lose their right to own plots in the donated property unless Campo and his men were "evicted," she said.

The 50 families were beneficiaries of Jessie's 38-year old [illegible] but promises residential lots and livelihood to its members, mostly migrant families in sitio Magsaysay.

Last year, Santiago said he [illegible] a meeting between Torres and Campo to settle the dispute.

But while Campo was open to giving the government its share of whatever gold would be recovered, the affidavit said Torres was hesitant.

"What he wanted was to drive Campo away from the excavation site," he said. "But I told we could [not] do that unless there's an eviction order coming from the court."

'38,000-ha estate'

Torres said the disputed property was part of his 38,000-hectare estate covering portions of Bulacan, Quezon and Rizal. He said he bought the said property from the late Don Ignacio Gaona, do in 1982.

"If the general really wants the eight hectares, I could easily give [it] to him," the 71-year-old Torres said. "But this is not just about the property dispute, it's about principles."

An Inquirer report had former housing czar and now Environment Secretary Mike Defensor identifying Torres as a leader of a "professional squatting syndicate."

Torres said he knows about the accusation but his "conscience is clear."

"During Marcos' time, I was usually referred to as the king of squatters because I championed their cause. I gave them their area properties," he said. "I'm not part of any syndicate. My properties all have legal issue titles."

Do you want to join the Jesuits?

THE JESUIT Priests and Brothers will be holding a vocation seminar for male college students and young professionals on Sunday Nov 21, 2004.

The seminar will be held at the Xavier Institute Building, Ateneo de Manila Campus, Loyola Heights, 1108 Quezon City, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Registration is free.

For details, those interested may call 426-6161 and ask for any member of the Ateneo Dominican Team. Or you may send an email at [illegible] or [illegible]

ENTERTAINMENT

TV viewers should stop being victims

VIEWFINDER
Katrina
L. Flores

INTERACTING with media people from all over the world earlier this month, we observed the observation that, these days, television has eclipsed film as the most influential and powerful communication medium in the world.

The ever expanding opposition from some of the movie people persists, but we were gratified to see that they shared our view. In fact, they said that, aside from making movies for the big screen, they were also involved in a number of TV projects, mostly of the documentary or TV movie sort.

They are elated TV's current experience in the rapid advances in technology that have resulted in hundreds of cable channels. TV images approaching the quality, detail and expressiveness of film, and new modes of viewing made possible by home, direct, computer and, in the near future, even cell phones.

All of these new-found strengths have made TV the medium of our times, with unmatched power to inform or deceive, inspire or disillusion.

Unfortunately, some of the participants in the media congress reported, viewers have largely failed to keep up with the advances of the medium in terms of utilizing their own power to direct and control its progress and success.

This is because TV has become so much a part of our lives that, quite often, we aren't even all that aware that it's there. It's become so pervasive (TV set in the toilet, anyone?) that it has psychologically numbed most of us to the sort of electronic "wallpaper" that's there all the time, but passively invisible in us as our awareness of it is concerned.

Embedded nicely, TV isn't just wallpaper, it's a diverse medium, one that works on both our conscious and unconscious sensibilities, because it catches us at our most vulnerable—right inside our brains.

Most of the time, we switch the TV set on merely for entertainment and news, but we get much, much more. Because, in the ways that it constructs and delivers us, TV communicates attitudes, points of view, biases, opinions, while affecting our own view of life, especially the vulnerable young.

That's why viewers have to remind themselves that they shouldn't be mere receptors of what the medium throws their way. They should have some measure of control and feedback beyond the remote control, to be part of the mixing cast.

We should keep in mind that TV networks make use of the airwaves, which belong to us, so they should be of service to us, not just to their corporate financial bottom line.

To generate the highest ratings, commercial TV networks use the "least common denominator" style of programming that that approach results in shlocky and exploitative shows, so viewers who don't want their children "shortsized" by irresponsible TV should protest.

Instead of grumbling to anyone, they should write letters to the TV networks, and to newspapers. If their complaints remain unheard, they should form larger groups and pressure government to revoke cable TV franchises, if need be.

People unhappy about the shows they watch on the small screen should stop being victims and learn to use the supposed strength of viewer power.

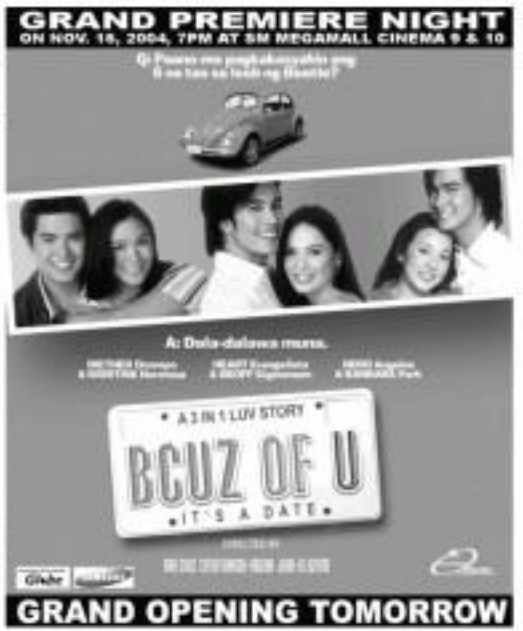
'Girl with X-Ray Eyes'

THE DISCOVERY Channel is about to unleash upon us, "Girl with X-Ray Eyes," at 7 p.m. on Nov. 17, 9 a.m. on Nov. 18, and 9 a.m. on Nov. 21. The subject is **Natasha Demkina**, a Russian schoolgirl who is fast becoming a phenomenon because of her supposed ability to see into people's bodies and diagnose anything from deterioration to potentially cancerous growths.

Feedback

FROM **Pearl R. Morad** of Marikina City: "I would like to request our TV channels to please telecast the documentary on John F. Kennedy, 'Years of Lightning, Days of Drama,' on or before Nov. 22, the anniversary of his assassination in 1963. It's a moving production, with narration by Gregory Peck, no less.

"I'm sure Kennedy fans here will be delighted to see the documentary again."



THAI SUCCESS CITED

30 lawmakers want 'alcogas' program revived

By Carlito Pablo

CITING the success of Thailand's ethyl alcohol program, a bloc of 30 congressmen is calling for the revival of the Marcos-era "alcogas" program.

The lawmakers, led by Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri (Lakas, Bukidnon), filed House Bill No. 3365 providing for a National Fuel Ethanol Program as a response to the high oil prices in the world market.

Zubiri said the fuel ethanol is ethyl alcohol derived from sugarcane, which is then blended with regular petroleum products.

"Thailand, thanks to its full-blown ethanol program, now sells at 35- and 10-percent blends to gasoline," he said.

Under HB 3365, the Department of Energy, Agriculture, Trade, Finance, and Science and Technology will come up with an ethanol program that would provide for the potential of the country's fuel needs.

"In a $4-billion to $6-billion annual import bill, savings on fuel ethanol or alcogas can be at $300 million to $360 million," Zubiri said.

Ethanol or ethyl alcohol is normally more expensive to produce than oil derived from gasoline but Zubiri pointed out that with improvements now at more than $40 a barrel, the former becomes viable.

"As the prices of oil surge beyond the $50-plus per barrel mark, and shows signs of rebounding, now is the time once again to consider ethanol program," he said.

Zubiri noted that the country has 2,000,000 hectares of land planted to sugarcane which can be an adequate source for the alternative fuel.

"The fighting target is to have one liter in every 10 liters pumped into cars," he said.

Former President Ferdinand Marcos started the ethanol program in the 1970s when oil prices shot up, but it did not fully develop.

Zubiri also cited ecological considerations behind the alcogas program.

"Because it is biofuel, it is a clean energy source, without compromising engine performance," he said.

Zubiri also said that the program will give the ailing sugar industry a needed shot in the arm because of depressed world prices for sugar.

"Morgan would definitely the industry hence a local production is a boon to the poorest of the energy sector," he said.

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Gov't consultants got ₱1.5B in '03, says solon

By Carlos Conde

ZUBIRI

THE NACIONAL gov. consultants paid P1.5 billion to do "acts of consultancy" in 2003, according to Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri (Lone, Sultan).

Citing a recent Commission on Audit report, Zubiri said that the amount was part of the P1.2 billion paid for "professional services" last year.

He noted that the payment for professional services actually increased by about P1.0 billion from P3.3 billion to less paid by the national government in 2002.

On top of this, the government also spent P479.6 billion for salaries, wages and other compensation for its regular employees.

"Celebrating professional services and hiring consultants are not budget no," Zubiri said. "But when done people duplicates functions of regular personnel or become 13-30 ghost employees, then the practice becomes wrong."

He noted the COA report did not name the agencies which had spent the most for their consultants.

Zubiri said that a COA official interviewed by his office admitted that half of the P1.5 billion fee for consultants in 2003 went to those hired by two Quezon City-based consulting companies.

The Departments of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources, and Agrarian Reform are based in Quezon City.

Zubiri said that projects funded through loans, grants and official development assistance were "most suitable to advocate made by consultants."

Trauma afflicts returning GIs from Iraq, says study

Front page A1

crime and despair.

Mental health experts said the psychological fallout of the Iraq war was likely to worsen.

"The bad news is that the study underestimated the prevalence of what we are going to see down the road," said Brad Steve Henderson, executive director of the National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder at the US Veterans Administration.

The survey of 6,200 Marines and sailors who served in the early months of the war by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research included only troops willing to report their problems, the Times noted.

The study did not look at veterans, who tend to suffer a higher rate of psychological injury. And soldiers in the study served in clearly marked areas of the war, where many were obvious and before the Iraqi insurgency took shape, it said.

Mental health professionals urged the US government to move quickly to address the problem.

"When we missed the boat with the Vietnam vets, we didn't get another chance," said Jerry Clark, director of a veterans clinic in Alexandria, Virginia, outside Washington.

"When they left the service, they were always not for a month or two but for 10 years. And they some back addicted, incarcerated and all those things. We don't miss the boat again. It is urgent time." AFP

No way out for Garcia

Front page A1

gunboat in line with the principle of civilian supremacy over the military.

Mr Arroyo said her administration was determined to "stop corruption wherever it may be found, be it in our ports of entry, in the private sector or the government or the military, if we are to restore any sense of fairness to the system."

'Cooperate with me'

She also asked the Chinese-Filipino community to cooperate with her to "get rid of the scourge of smuggling."

"The war against corruption also requires a war against smuggling and this war is being strengthened in all our major ports and retail outlets. I ask you, the officers and members of the general chamber, to cooperate with me on that score. We need all this to be able to uplift our fiscal house," she said.

Mr Arroyo said the root cause of the government's financial problems was the "festering and unbridled culture of corruption."

"Many people don't pay their fair share of taxes today and they're aided and abetted by corrupt officials," she said. "We're making sure that these corrupt officials and our dodgers are caught, ill-gotten gains [confiscated] and fines collected," she said.

GARCIA

Nayan abductors set new deadline

Front page A1

their minister in Afghanistan to ensure the freedom of the 34-year-old hostage.

"Iman Nayan remains featured on its work—to exert every effort to secure the freedom of Angelito—and will not be distracted by media reports of new deadlines or hindrances to the negotiations," DFA spokesperson Lilibeth Jusayan said in a statement.

"There are other options and strategies that need to be taken. We remain focused on the work to secure the freedom of Nayan," Jusayan told reporters. He declined to elaborate.

Afghan officials and diplomats can't that criminal groups or warlord militias may be involved, and say negotiations are being held with several different groups. Officials suggest the three hostages may be held in the Kabul area.

Agha insisted his group was not seeking ransom for Nayan and his two fellow hostages.

"The Afghan authorities have come up with this allegation as a face saving measure because it is pressed in the world that they are powerless" to resolve the hostage crisis, he said.

The kidnappers released a video of the frightened looking hostages three days after armed men forced them from their closely watched IFI rehab on a street in the capital.

A week ago, at least two of the hostages phoned home to say they were all right, but there has been no word on their condition since.

Campaign

Arroyo also said that Ambassador Bot Urbano, Chargé d'Affaires Rizalino Navarro and Foreign Undersecretary Rafael Seguis were working assiduously to secure the freedom of 31-year-old Filipino accountant Robert Tarongoy who was abducted by Islamic militants in Iraq on Nov. 1.

The Filipino officials "are also mobilizing the small Filipino peacekeeping contingent from Iraq in compliance with the demands of kidnappers holding Filipino truck driver Angelo de la Cruz.

The drivers was released, but the drivers' head was cut off after the hostage deadline passed.

Arroyo said negotiations with the kidnappers in Afghanistan and Iraq prohibited the payment of any ransom.

"We reiterate that the Philippines has zero tolerance policy in dealing with abduction cases. ... There's no ransom, we're not raising any fund," he said.

Manila's intransigence have evidently not endeared with Tarongoy's kidnappers. According to press reports, the kidnappers were demanding $50 1.2 million for Tarongoy's freedom.

The US ambassador to the Philippines, Francis Ricciardone, assured Manila last week against negotiating with the abductors, saying the would only encourage more kidnappings of Filipinos.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was strongly criticized by the United States last July after she withdrew the small Filipino peacekeeping contingent from Iraq in compliance with the demands of kidnappers holding Filipino truck driver Angelo de la Cruz.

The drivers was released, but the drivers' head was cut off after the hostage deadline passed. *Reports from AP, AFP and TJ Burgonio*

RP to lead antiterror task force of Apec

Front page A1

For the, Washington officials rebuked Ms Arroyo. But last Wednesday Bush called up the President to tell her: "Let's keep our friendship strong."

An opposition senator yesterday greeted with skepticism Malacañang's pronouncement that the rural relations between the Philippines and the United States had warmed after Bush called up Ms Arroyo.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said Bush had shown he was a "compulsive politician" by reaching out to Ms Arroyo.

US' best interest

"There's always politics in the relations among nations. And the President of a country like the United States will always act according to the best interest of the United States," Enrile said in a private forum.

"And that interest includes showing some degree of courtesy and friendliness to other heads of state, especially a country like the Philippines that has been a longtime ally of the United States," he added.

The initiative taken by Bush was to the advantage of the United States, according to Enrile, as fellow Senate Leader Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

"They know that the Philippines is an strategically located and they can't dismiss it out of paper," he said.

Pimentel added that getting a phone call from no less than the most powerful man in the world could help boost one's stamina at bay "It would help diminish coup plotters," he said.

For his part, Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said maintaining open lines of communication with the president of the world's only superpower was important to the country.

"It is, however, more important for us to bear in mind that a relationship with any other nation in order to good so it is mutually beneficial," Pangilinan said.

No big deal

Administration Sen. Joker Arroyo was dismissive about all the "fuss" over the call from Bush. "It's no big deal," he said in a phone interview.

The senator said that Ms Arroyo and Bush would use each other this week at the Apec summit in Chile.

Apec groups Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam.

In Santiago, Chile, Bush will be seated beside Ms Arroyo during the Apec dinner on Nov. 20.

Under left would be President Bush and under right the Canadian leader," a Malacañang official said.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo hailed the election of the Philippines as chair of Apec's Counter-Terrorism Task Force, saying it was a recognition of Manila's gains in the global war against terror.

The country was elected CTTF chair during the Apec Concluding Senior Officials' Meeting in Chile, according to Ms. Angelita M. Eis. Catalina, noting Philippine senior official for Apec. Chile serves as vice chair.

Over the past few years, Philippine military and police have arrested suspected operatives of the militant group Jemaah Islamiyah, including some who were implicated in bombings in Manila and elsewhere, and members of the Abu Sayyaf kidnap gang.

The Abu Sayyaf, which gained notoriety for seizing mostly American hostages in the late 1990s in exchange for millions of dollars in ransom, is on the US watch list of foreign terrorist organizations.

The Philippines, which will chair the task force from 2005 to 2006, is tasked with coordinating Apec's various projects on counterterrorism, jointly building as well as the body's work on removing trade. *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Christine O. Avendaño and TJ Burgonio*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, November 16, 2004
33rd Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Rev 3:1-6, 14-22
Gospel: Lk 19:1-10

When Jesus entered Jericho and was going through the city a man named Zacchaeus was there. He was a tax collector and a wealthy man. He wanted to see what Jesus was like, but he was a short man and could not see because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree. From there he would be able to see Jesus who had to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly for I must stay at your house today." So Zacchaeus hurried down and welcomed him joyfully.

All the people who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to the house of a sinner as a guest." But Zacchaeus spoke to Jesus, "I'm half of my goods, Lord, I give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone I will pay him back four times as much." Looking at him Jesus said, "Salvation has come to this house today, for he is also a true son of Abraham. The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."

Commentary

Zacchaeus responded very gallantly to Jesus. Matthew, another tax collector left his tax business to follow Jesus. Then we can remember the story of the tax collector in the back of the Temple and how he saw himself "in right with God" (Lk 18:14). They serve a hated class of people, for they *sign up to personally advocate the wrongs of others!*

We hope it's true of us all. People generally make the decision daily based on themselves. If you are such a person, it will do you good to read this paragraph from the 19th century mystic, Andrew Murray:

"Human judging is related because of the different things we see—sometimes it is good and understanding, sometimes it is dark and erring. Where our judgment is good and understanding it belongs to God's justice, where it is harsh and distrusting our good Lord Jesus commits it by his mercy and grace through the power of the Holy Passion, and so makes it complete in his mercy justice. ... Divine compassion alone is God's throne and wealth—yet I could see neither of these to find. In my longing one greater than I encompass."

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

LABOR CASE (LABOR RELATIONS)—Notice of termination due to retrenchment must be served on employees.—For a valid retrenchment due to overmanning, the law requires that written notices of the intended retrenchment be served by the employer on the worker and on the Department of Labor and Employment at least one month before the effectivity of the retrenchment. The purpose of this requirement is to give employees some time to prepare for the eventual loss of their jobs, as well as to give them the opportunity to ascertain the verity of the alleged cause of termination. There is no showing that such notice was served on the employees in the present case. The written notice should have been served on the employees themselves or on their supervisors. However, resignation is the voluntary act of employees who are compelled by personal reasons to disassociate themselves from their employment. It must be done with the intention of relinquishing an office, accompanied by the act of abandonment. Therefore, it would have been illogical for respondents to resign and then file a Complaint for Illegal Dismissal. Resignation is inconsistent with the filing of the complaint. (Dionisio-Sandoval, Jr. [Justice Penaranda, Ret.] Division, Rizal Plywood Corp. vs. Abaigar, G. R. No. 148810, April 14, 2004)

See'eMall!

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Julio Iglesias in concert

ON DEC. 11, Julio Iglesias will sing his signature love songs in a special concert at the Araneta Coliseum. The show is part of the Asian leg of his 2004 world tour in honor of his 30th anniversary of "To All the Girls I've Loved Before," the hit single that made him a household name. Call 911-5555.

'Gilmore Girls'

AS THE fourth season of "Gilmore Girls" unfolds on Studio 23 (8:40 p.m., Saturdays), Lorelai and Rory are in their way back to Stars Hollow after spending the summer backpacking through Europe, but with Rory on her way to college, many new questions arise for the now-separated mother-daughter team.

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ibarra

Iran agrees to freeze nuclear program

TEHRAN/VIENNA—Iran pledged on Sunday to suspend its uranium enrichment program to ease concerns that its nuclear program is aimed at developing weapons, but warned that the freeze was only temporary.

Hassan Rohani, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, said the suspension would remain in place as long as talks with the EU continued on a final resolution of the issue.

"Our home ages are confirmed a letter to the IAEA," Rohani told reporters after a meeting in Tehran with the ambassadors of Britain, Germany and France, which have been negotiating with Iran for several months on behalf of the European Union.

Receipt of the letter by the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, makes the scope and starting date of the suspension legally binding.

Iran's UN ambassador, Pirouz Hosseini, declined to say when the Iranian would take effect. "Everything are still [runs every thing," he said.

A senior EU diplomat close to the talks said Iran had agreed to all points covered in a preliminary agreement hammered out in Paris a week ago. "We have reached a full agreement regarding all the documentation in the package," he said.

Iran, which denies US accusations that it is secretly developing atomic weapons, had held up a final deal by demanding that it be permitted to continue the early stages of uranium conversion. The EU rejected this idea.

"The suspension is what the European wanted," a full one," a diplomat close to the IAEA said.

A diplomat close to the IAEA said the arrival of the letter on Sunday meant it would be included in a crucial report, due to be released on Monday, that would be the basis for a meeting of the IAEA's two-year investigation into Tehran's nuclear program.

Once confirmed by IAEA inspectors on the ground, the freeze is likely to protect Iran from being reported to the UN Security Council, the possible economic sanctions when the IAEA board of governors meets on Nov. 25.

The "EU Three" have said that, once the suspension begins, they will discuss a package of incentives with Iran...ranging from cooperation on peaceful nuclear technology to a possible trade deal—for its move for Iran permanently giving up any activities that could be used to make bomb-grade material.

Rohani's deputy Hossein Mousavian told reporters those talks would start on Dec. 15.

However, questions remain, as Iran has continued to insist that it will never give up its "sovereign right" to enrich uranium, even while negotiating with the EU.

"We have accepted the suspension as a voluntary step and it does not create any obligations for us," Rohani's deputy, Hossein Mousavian, told Iranian state television.

Washington, which accuses Iran of using its nuclear power program as a front to develop nuclear weapons, wants the IAEA to refer the case upwards because Tehran concealed a uranium enrichment program for 18 years.

Diplomats in Vienna said that, with a suspension in place, the United States would have only a handful of supporters on the IAEA 35-member board for such a move.

The White House reacted cautiously to Iran's announcement, saying: "We look forward to a binding by our European friends."

The IAEA board had determined in September that Iran had been in noncompliance with its safeguards agreement. But Tehran has continued producing parts for centrifuges that purify uranium for use in nuclear power plants or weapons. Reuters

ROHANI

Chirac says no to state support for mosques

MARSEILLE, France—In a major broadside, President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin on Sunday rejected a senior minister's idea of using state funds to build mosques and train Islamic religious leaders.

Chirac pointedly assisted his arch-rival—Finance Minister Nicolas Sarkozy is expected to seek his job in the 2007 presidential election—of trying to "open up a new and pointless debate in France on topics that must remain taboo."

Raffarin said that for the government to get mixed up in religion in any way would undermine the very foundations of the French republic, which is based on a strict separation of church and state.

Reflecting concern about the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, Sarkozy is quoted as saying in a new book that it was "preferable for youth to have spiritual hope than to have to do their heads with the gospel of violence, drugs or money" and arguing that the state should be allowed to help minority faiths struggling to meet requirements similar to those Catholics enjoy.

Politicians were quick to react, by name. Raffarin likened those who hold such views to "sorcerer's apprentices" threatening the basis of the republic.

Sarkozy's remarks dwarfed those by public and religious as complacency, but Raffarin said it was vital to preserve intact a 1905 law on the separation of church and state. AFP

Warming threatens Australia

SYDNEY—Tens of populated Australia will become uninhabitable within current capital action to reduce or reduce greenhouse gases, the director of a leading think tank warned here Monday.

Australia Institute executive director Clive Hamilton told an environmental talk here that Australia faced a bleak future, with major population movements because of extreme weather events and the rise of insect-borne diseases.

"I think parts of Australia which are currently inhabited will be uninhabitable," he said at the International Climate Change Taskforce meeting here.

"I think we'll see large scale population movements, I think we'll see people from climate proofing their homes. At least, that's what would be people will be able to do.

"I think we'll see rapid increases in some vector-borne diseases, we'll see rural communities devastated by changes in precipitation and increases in warming and the greater frequency of extreme weather events.

"Normal times as an environmental value I'm afraid is a thing of the past, until I read the reports by the scientists who say things even more scary."

The Climate Change Taskforce meeting here Monday in Sydney recommendations on how to meet global climate change policy beyond the Kyoto Protocol. AFP

38 GIs, 1,200 Iraqis killed in weeklong Falluja battle

FALLUJA, Iraq—Marines have struck Falluja on Monday as US-led forces hunted for defiant rebels after taking almost total control of the city in a weeklong battle that killed 38 US soldiers and more than 1,200 insurgents.

But victory in the Sunnipoint Iraqi enclave will not spell the end to a vicious rebellion against Iraqi US-backed government as violence flared in the southern capital of Baghdad and mourners buried 48 more in Mosul.

"Iraqi forces and Multi-National forces-Iraq have secured most of the Iraqi Interim government, but operations are not over," the military said in a statement, noting that US troops backed by Iraqi soldiers were combing mosques and other buildings for weapons as they secured the Sunni Muslim stronghold.

"In the last 24 hours, coalition ground forces and Iraqi Security Forces have captured numerous, attacking and killing forces in numerous buildings throughout the city," a statement said, listing military terminology to describe militants.

One weapons blasted an underground bunker complex of steel reinforced concrete in the very south of Falluja during a pre-dawn raid, which appeared to have been used by rebels to mount attacks.

It also included a command a ring of facilities filled with weapons, an anti-aircraft artillery gun, bunkers, a truck and a suspected weapons cache," the military said.

Amid growing fears of a humanitarian crisis in Falluja, where a curfew of Red Crescent trucks carrying vital food and medical supplies has been prevented from entering the city due to the continued dangers, the military insisted that everything was being done to treat wounded civilians. AFP

EID PRAYERS

Indian Muslims take part in Eid prayers at Shahi Masjid (mosque) outside the Taj Mahal in Agra Nov. 15. Muslims across the world celebrate Eid al-Fitr, the festival marking the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. AFP

India to pull out 40,000 soldiers from Kashmir

BEIJING—Nearly 40,000 Indian troops in disputed Kashmir will be withdrawn to boost peace talks with rival Pakistan, a news report said Monday.

The report came four days after Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh ordered a reduction of troops in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir starting this winter and ending in March, though he did not disclose how many troops would be withdrawn.

Kashmir is a flash point for hostilities between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan. They have fought two wars over the region, which is divided between them, and Islamabad backs militants in Kashmir. A reduction in troop numbers would be a significant step toward reducing tensions.

The proposed troop cutback appears to be a response to Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf's call last month for Hindu leaders to withdraw troops to boost peace talks with rival Pakistan, a news report said Monday.

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The proposed troop cutback appears to be a response to Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf's call last month for Hindu leaders to withdraw troops to boost peace talks with rival Pakistan, said his proposal to demilitarize the territory.

India's army is likely to soon withdraw a mountain division of 15,000 soldiers and send them both to the eastern region to guard India's borders with China, The Pioneer newspaper reported.

Another mountain division of 15,000 soldiers would be brought from the Siachen Glacier region, but kept in the state for the time being, the newspaper quoted unidentified sources as saying.

Nearly 20,000 of 30,000 soldiers of a counterinsurgency force would also be called to Indian police to would return to their peacetime units, the daily said. Their presence would be reduced to small and remote towns and villages, following complaints of human rights violations. AP

Mystery infection downs 28 HK children in hospital

HONG KONG—Health authorities in Hong Kong are investigating the sudden fall of a mysterious respiratory illness in a hospital that has infected 28 children.

Tests conducted late last week showed the children were not infected with SARS or influenza.

"We will see if they need to be further isolated, and to see if we need staff reinforcements," Health Minister York Chow told reporters on Monday.

The children are all long-term residents at the Kowloon Bay Central Medical Center, a hospital for mentally handicapped children.

Four more children developed fever and symptoms of respiratory infection on Monday.

An 11-year-old girl, who had chronic medical problems, died of a blood infection in the hospital on Nov. 9, but authorities have yet to confirm if the girl died of the same disease now affecting the other children.

Tests on the children have returned no response for SARS, influenza A and B, and other respiratory related diseases. We are still checking," a health department spokesperson said.

Some local newspapers have criticized the government for its handling of the case, which evoked memories of health disease that have dogged Hong Kong in recent years, including SARS and the deadly H5N1 bird flu. Reuters

Bush reelection seen behind softening of N. Korea's tone

By Marvin Sleeby

SEOUL—North Korea, pragmatic if not always predictable, is softening its tone and edging back to six-party talks ahead of its current confidence now US President George W. Bush has won another four years in power, analysts say.

The aim, they say, appears to be to signal to Washington it will talk sooner rather than later and to think but no need to toughen his policy after a recent more-aider visit.

The North Korean foreign ministry said on Saturday it would be "quite possible" to resolve the nuclear crisis if the United States dropped its hostile policy and signed a no-attack with the communist state. It said it was not insisting on bilateral talks.

Take it or not, North Korea, which pose by the official name of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, now has to live with the Bush administration for another four years," said the Korea Herald newspaper in an editorial.

"No wonder it was changing policy when it denied on Saturday that it was insisting on direct talks."

The North has often used Bush's hardline approach as a blame for the lack of progress in the six-way talks—which also include China, Japan, Russia and South Korea.

...but Saturday's comments were mild in tone and hinted at the chance of resumed talks.

"North Korea is not so remote to the point of breaking down on the hostile policy," said Jongpil Unisociety professor Park Tu-hwan, who monitors North Korea closely. "It's possible that a posture would be enough to bring the North back."

Pairs have been three rounds of six-way talks since the ones first broke in October 2002. Pyongyang declared an agreed fourth meeting in September and made clear last week to China and Japan that another round would be difficult. But now it pointedly did not close the door to more talks altogether.

In Saturday's statement, a statement spokesperson said some US media had ignored "numerous efforts" the six-party talks could not succeed because the North wanted bilateral negotiations.

The North has frequently called for direct talks with Washington but belatedly—and grudgingly, critics say—endorsed the multilateral approach.

During the US presidential election campaign, the differences between Bush's approach to North Korea and that of Democratic rival John Kerry was boiled down to multilateral versus bilateral talks, although the gap between the two sides was actually quite narrow.

"They feel safe for bilateral talks with Kerry. But since this won't happen, they are just saying they didn't expect it," said researcher Kim Seung-chul at the Sejong Institute think tank.

Analysts said the ministry's comments about bilateral and multilateral talks could not be taken to refer to Seoul and Bush directly, although it accepted the Nov. 2 result.

"This is showing that the North finally is understanding Bush's reappointment in a reality and is sending a message that they are willing to attend the talks," said Park Jae-gyun, a senior research fellow at the Korea Institute for National Unification.

The influential Brussels-based International Crisis Group said in a report issued on Monday that Washington should offer a formal declaration that it has no hostile intent and pledge proposal to the North and that diplomats in the Bush administration had given Pyongyang time to develop arms.

North Korea's weekend statements come just hours after South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun said in Los Angeles that the United States should talk to the North instead of taking a hard line.

He said it was wrong to conclude that the North was trying to develop nuclear weapons to attack someone or support terrorism.

Critical conservative media pounced on his remarks. Reuters

UN readies I. Coast sanctions

GBAGBO

ABBAS with a small cut on his nose after the shooting incident/Nov. 14. AFP

Abbas unhurt in Gaza gunfight

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MCLAUGE of stars, "Boys of U," sounds goodh (from left) Catherine Garcia Molina, John D Lazatin and Mae Cruz

KRISTINE Hermosa and Dexter Doroja

HEART Evangelista and Geoff Eigenmann

3 directors and a movie, plus 3 hot love teams

THREE heads are better than one, and this is proven beyond doubt by the three young, dynamic directors of Star Cinema's Valentine in-November offering, "Boys of U," the three-in-one movie featuring three of the hottest love teams today.

"Boys of U" stars Kristine Hermosa and Dexter Doroja, Heart Evangelista and Geoff Eigenmann, and Chris Angeles and Sandara Park.

The directors are John D. Lazatin, Catherine Garcia Molina and Mae Cruz.

Lazatin, 34, a classroom graduate from Ateneo, is the most senior of the three, having directed two hit youth movies, both for Star Cinema—"Narwa'tmore" (2002) with Jericho Rosales and Kristine Hermosa, and half of "My First Romance" with Heart Evangelista and John Prats.

"Boys of U' shows why we are all faced with different choices even if we have someone who truly loves us," says Lazatin. "My episode explains that no matter what choices you make, you may end with love or someone. But when a person you've always measured in your heart is the same person you parted ways with and found again, then you are truly meant for each other."

Lazatin cut his directorial teeth by helming ABS-CBN soaps, including "Rosas" starring Sara Ames, and "Sarah the Teen Princess" with Sarah Geronimo in the title role.

Declared Star Director for TV in the 13th annual KBP Awards the past March, Molina is taking her film debut here in "Boys of U," in which she directs the episode starring Chris and Sandara.

Like Lazatin, Molina's directorial skills were honed on ABS-CBN soaps. Only 30, the BS communication graduate from the University of the Philippines Institute in Film and Audio-Visual first worked as script coordinator-girl in "Studio ang Puso Ko," directed by Chito Roño. She was the associate director of Olivia Lamasan in "Mulawin Mo Kaya the Movie" and "Minsan Minahal Kita," "Got to Believe" and "Milan," of Joey L. Quirino in "Bantu't Kasunto Kita," and of Roño again in "Separada."

Molina's TV work includes "Marimella," "Sa Puso Ko, Impatso Ka," "Mangarap Ka" and "Talking Bag."

In "Boys of U," Sandara plays a visiting Korean who deserves Hwa, a tourist guide, into believing that she's a popular star in Korea. Hwa is driving a fixed-it-what-he-comes upon Sandara as the expert.

Says Molina, "I feel privileged directing Hero and Sandara. Bigay sa akin ang segment ng dalawa. Me filed dahil para ako kasama ng apat, mahahalin. One common trait we shared during the shooting. Everything is done every weekend and my dedication helped."

Directing the Heart-Geoff episode is Cruz, 23, a 1994 graduate of UP Diliman major in Film).

Like Lazatin and Molina, Cruz started her directorial career in TV, handling anthology-starring soaps in "Sangkot Sa Yo, "Dyesebel ang Dilanga" and "Krystala," and episodes of "Maalaala Mo Kaya" shows Sharyn Regis, Rhik Bautista, Erik Santos, and others.

In "Boys of U," Heart plays a girl who's afraid to fall in love. But one day her Beetle breaks down and Geoff comes to her rescue, a guy who's not ready for a responsible relationship.

Says Cruz, "In my episode, we want to show people have ups and trials in the name of love. For example, the person you're dating now may not be the person really meant for you. It turns out to augment by pulling things, facing heartaches."

The three episodes are linked by a Beetle

SANDARA Park and Hero Angeles

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ENTERTAINMENT Metro

DEFYING DESCRIPTION The ballet, performed in Hong Kong, is neither classical nor modern, according to the Filipino choreographer.

Filipino directs Beatles ballet

HONG KONG—Hong Kong's acclaimed ballet company is about to add two unlikely names to the likes of Balanchine and Ivanhoe—Lennon and McCartney.

John Lennon and Paul McCartney, the dowing force behind pop's greatest phenomenon, will be remembered in classical dance Thursday when the Hong Kong Ballet opens a short run of shows set to a collection of Beatles' tunes.

"Beatles on a string," one of a three-part short program called "Trilogy" will see seven of the Mop Tops' classic tracks given the poises-and-wires treatment.

The Filipino choreographer Carlo Orcia, one of the company's leading dancers, the production's in-first cloth at directing a big show and he chose The Beatles to make a big first impression.

"They don't come bigger than The Beatles, do they?" said Orcia, who as 28 says, however, that he is too young to remember them.

He said he came up with the idea of creating a ballet around Beatles songs after stumbling across a rare CD of their music.

"I'm not really a huge Beatles fan but I found an album of their songs performed by a baroque orchestra and thought it would be ideal," said the Philippine-born dancer who has been with the company for six years.

"It evoked a lot of images in my mind of what could be done in terms of dance."

The Beatles' music has been reinterpreted countless different ways.

First of its kind

Among the most original was a collection of country versions by the Chutes River Valley Boys and an album, "Snoopy's Beatles Chookie," in which Beatles hits were performed using meowing.

Apart from a production by New York's American Ballet Theatre Company in 2002 that was set to songs by George Harrison, Dana Initiewes his is the first ballet to be built around the band's music.

"I didn't think popular music could be as adaptable to classical ballet but when it is interpreted by a baroque orchestra it opens up for more possibilities," Patterson.

The choreographer has chosen songs that span the band's eight years of recorded output. Opening with the ballad "Michelle," the performance then embraces the preachy "And I Love Her," the rocking "Hard Day's Night," slow-burner "Goodnight," "Eight Days a Week" and "Yellow Submarine" before closing with "Lady Madonna."

Orcia said that for his first ensemble-sized work he wanted to give some of the company's lesser-seeking dancers a chance to take a lead role.

"I have deliberately not cast the soloists or principals in lead roles because I wanted to give the other dancers their time in the limelight," he said.

Hard work

"It allowed us to have a lot of fun with the music and with the dancers... what we have created defies description, it's neither classical nor modern."

Star dancer Daniel Hume has his own assessment. "It is hard work."

The soloist, who most recently took a lead role in the company's production of "Swan Lake," said the dancers only had problems adapting to Beatles music because the choreography is so expressive.

"The choreography by necessity has not been very technical but it is very jerky" said Hume. Ed.

"But what has made it easier is the fact that it's The Beatles. Everyone knows their music and rehearsals were great because, unlike during practice for classical ballets, we could actually sing along during the shows."

AFP

THE HANDS. The computer-generated characters of "The Polar Express" drew mostly negative comments, but Zemeckis says they are based on training the movements of real-life actors. Tom Hanks is the basis of both Santa Claus and the conductor as well as a third character.

Praise, jeers greet Zemeckis' 'Polar Express'

LOS ANGELES—Warner Bros.' big-budget movie for children, "The Polar Express," pulled into theaters last week with a load of mixed reviews, ranging from praise for its season-holiday classic to jeers for a huge disappointment.

The computer-animated movie, which reportedly cost about $270 million to make and market, is a major financial risk for the studio and a massive test for the new "performance capture" technology used to make it.

Whether the film could be branded for box-office success won't be known until this Sunday's weekend box-office estimates and then whether it does well during the Thanksgiving holiday. As for the quality of the film's story and animation, film critics were divided.

Influential Chicago Sun-Times critic Roger Ebert said the movie "has the qualities of a lot of lasting children's entertainment." But New York Times reviewer Elvis Mitchell barga called it "a grave and disappointing failure, as much of imagination as of technology."

The Los Angeles Times' Kenneth Turan called it "something of a devil's bargain." He praised the visual inventiveness of Chris Van Allsburg's book from which the movie was made, but blasted "serious, maddening sluggishness and unnecessary spookiness."

In the movie, a young boy questions his belief in Santa Claus until he is magically transported to the North Pole aboard the Polar Express train to meet him.

The movie's star worked for many critics.

"Tom Hanks at it is feel like a teenager," the Washington Post said. The Hollywood Reporter called it "a runaway thrill when the train ascends, roller coaster-like through enormous peaks."

The animation in several scenes drew praise, especially one in which a young girl loses her train ticket and it swirls through the air over a lush, snow-covered landscape.

But the computer-generated characters, which director Robert Zemeckis based on tracking the movements of real-life actors, drew mostly negative comments.

The movie "fans uneven . . . exploiting human movements . . . but it fails to capture the subtlety of facial expressions or to introduce sympathetic, evocative figures," said Daily Variety a newspaper that covers the entertainment industry.

Zemeckis has said the humans were not meant to look real, but were supposed to resemble the book's illustrations.

"We had no intention of doing anything photo real," he said in a demonstration of the technology. "Photo real" is a term to describe digital characters designed to look authentic.

Warner Bros. is a unit of media conglomerate Time Warner Inc.

Reuters

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Criminal neglect

THE DERAILMENT of a Philippine National Railways train last Saturday in which at least six people were killed and 158 injured brings up five issues and problems.

The first is the criminal negligence of some people involved in railway operations, in particular, and of those in the transport industry in general.

EDITORIAL

The second (which is related to the first) is the low regard of Filipinos for human life.

The third is the lack of a security system to keep people off the railroad tracks for their own safety and to safeguard the railways from malicious mischief, theft and sabotage.

The fourth is the culture of impunity and forgetfulness that allows people responsible for the loss of scores, if not hundreds or thousands of human lives, to get off scot-free, without even so much as a slap on the wrist.

The fifth is the criminal neglect of our transport infrastructure and facilities and the crying need for the rehabilitation and modernization of the railway system.

Again, it appears that gross negligence was one of the major causes of the railroad accident in Bulan Bargos, Quezon, last Saturday. The train engineer must have known that the train was negotiating a curve and going over slippery rails. And yet he drove the train at 78 kilometers per hour when he had been told to slow down to 20 kph. The engineer, after due hearing, should be made to answer to the full extent of the law for the death of six people and injuries to 158.

The accident again underscores the Filipinos' low regard for human life. There is no great outrage over the negligence of the train engineer and the other people operating the train. After the initial press statements, the accident is going to be forgotten. One big measure of the people's forgetfulness is the case of the sinking of the Doña Paz, the world's biggest maritime disaster, in which about 4,000 people died. Up to now justice has not been obtained for the 4,000 dead.

Because of the lack of public outrage, the lack of interest in pursuing cases, and the general apathy of the ruling public, the culture of impunity has not been shattered. There is no effort to ensure the safety of the people who use public transport. It's all "Bahala na," where the odds of accidents happening can be reduced to a minimum if only higher standards were applied in the operation of public transport facilities.

The Padre Burgos accident also underscores the lack of a security system for the railways. One theory advanced to explain the accident is that parts of the railroad tracks had been stolen by thieves. The lack of a security system cuts two ways: it leaves the railroad open to theft and sabotage and it endangers the lives of people who purposely or unconsciously stray into the tracks of oncoming trains. One recent example of the second is the accidental killing of Carlos "Caloy" Abrera who was hit by a train while he was shopping for plants near the railroad tracks.

The railways are perhaps the most neglected sector of our transport industry. The PNR is using rolling stock that is more than half a century old. The railroad tracks are poorly maintained. The wagons are decrepit and perhaps except for the air-conditioned coaches, are filthy and have unsanitary and unsightly toilets.

One bright piece of news is the recent announcement about the start of the North Railways project that would modernize the railways system from Manila to Malolos, Bulacan, and ultimately, to San Fernando, La Union. The modernization project will restore the North Rail system to its grandeur before World War II, when it was the preferred way to go to points north such as Baguio and San Fernando.

The railroads are

Needless 'sabong' of titans

POLITICAL TIDBITS
Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

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* * *

The high court declared null and void Comelec Resolution 6074, awarding the ACM contract to Mega Pacific Consortium, for the latter's failure to get qualified to bid for it. Also declared null and void was the contract between the Comelec and Mega Pacific consortium, which was incorporated only 11 days before the bidding! On the other hand, the complaint charged the officials and individuals alleged to conspire in the first step toward closing and making out-to-more-rooms rubble.

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At last one lawyer feels it quite himself to explain the issue of "civilian supremacy over the military" in arrest of Garcia. The term has been invoked by just about everyone and his uncle, but understandably it only succeeded in creating as much confusion.

In his column in another newspaper, Ann C. Rivera wrote: "Applying the constitutional principle of civilian supremacy over the military in the carrying of the Sandiganbayan arrest order against Garcia is a case of over-reaction." He said the issue does not involve a test of this principle. He stressed that the purpose of an arrest warrant is to place an accused still at the court under the jurisdiction of the court, so that he could be subject to all its orders and processes, "including his appearance when necessary." Arresting Garcia, however, is "no longer necessary because he has already been arrested and detained" by the military authorities who are agents of the same sovereign government as the civilian court is.

Rivera pointed out that military cells or civilian jails are both government detention facilities and that Garcia's detention by the military "is consistent with the Sandiganbayan's inherent jurisdiction over his person." The important thing is that he has already been arrested and detained by the government, he asserted.

* * *

Alam said what could be a violation of civilian supremacy of the Sandiganbayan order Garcia to appear in court for arraignment and trial and the military, which has him in its custody, refuses to release him unless he first signs a waiver of detention rights, which is against the law. He noted that the law which is preparing the court material in my Garcia for violations of the detention of this has angered the Sandiganbayan that it will produce Garcia before it on the day over the Garcia case is the report that the Ombudsman has given due course to the criminal complaint filed by new Bataan governor Enrique Garcia III against the Comelec commissioners and "conspiring private individuals" in the procurement of automated counting machines (ACMs) intended for use in the 2004 elections. The Ombudsman's order was based on the decision of the Supreme Court last Jan. 13, 2004 ordering a determination of the criminal liability of public officials and private individuals, if any, and the dismissal of joint complaint filed by Bataan transgressors and filibusters.

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To America and back

WHEN I was young, I didn't know anything about the United States except the things I heard during discussions of the Philippine-American issues. I grew up hating that country for having the Philippines for a ruin (the world not have given those generations of ours one of our more than 7,000 beautiful islands.

In high school, my eyes and mind were opened to the good things Americans brought to the Industrialized country education, technology, chocolate bars, movies, etc. But while I loved chocolates, I still pondered such important issues as the US bases, the threat of war and not having the first line of defense against United States' foreign enemies. But from time to time, I would be reminded that anti-land American education in the Philippines would be nowhere.

For college, I entered a university established by the United States, the University of the Philippines. And I again thought that education must really be the greatest contribution that country has brought to our nation. And I appreciated it.

However, being enrolled in the most university where student activism budded, I could not help but notice the contradictions. Here were students studying at an institution built by Americans and yet they were shouting profanities against them over issues like war, economics and interference. I was confused over which to take as the true picture of our country's relationship with the United States, most of the time I didn't care at all, besides I loved innocuous sports like basketball, ice hockey, football and, of course, baseball.

After graduation, I joined my alma mater as faculty member, but, Unlike most of my colleagues, I didn't indoctrinate my students on anti-United States sentiments. Instead, with my little success, to inculcate in them the virtues of hard work and perseverance.

At the age of 27, on a whim and one vow, I sold didn't care about social issues. All I wanted was to be successful in life, earn my master's and doctorate so that I could improve my chances of providing for my family. I was also eager to see my master's, but it did not have a great effect on our financial status. Now I am studying hard for my Ph.D., hoping that it will make the future brighter for my family.

And guess what? I am studying in the fabled United States under a Philippine government scholarship grant. But I wonder if I really have to go to a foreign land to get my degree. And why of all places. The United States? Maybe it my bias for their superiority that I pushed me here instead of another country? I know the United States has arguably the best universities and resources to help me achieve my objective, but universities in Japan, New Zealand, Australia and Europe, and even my alma mater are competitive. I am here, but I still wonder. Sorry in my heart. I always wanted to be in the "land of milk and honey," just like most Filipinos.

I only had a couple of weeks to prepare after I was advised by my sponsor that I had been accepted for a Ph.D. program in an American university. Instead, I prepared my entrance, asked permission from my employer and said goodbye to my things I would need during my stay. I couldn't say goodbye to all my friends and relatives since I was not so sure that I would really be leaving. However, some of my friends still managed to have a despedida for me.

On the day of my departure, our extended family gathered at the airport to see me off. I said my goodbyes as casually as I could, telling myself this would be no different from my two week trip to Malaysia a few months back. I'll be home sooner than I think. I kept reassuring myself.

The flight was long and tiring. I was warmly welcomed by a friend who met me at the airport and brought me to a new hotel. "Welcome to reality, kid," I said to myself as I settled in my room.

Then, it hit me. What am I doing here? I suddenly realized that I was going to stay in the university for four or more years, away from my wife and my son who had to stay behind.

The luxury of homesickness is not often in me. I experienced it during my stay in Malaysia. But this is different. While looking for an apartment, living alone, walking on campus, and attending my classes, there is this voice inside me shouting, "Go home! Go home! Go home!"

I really want to go home. It's cold just for a lark time, I'll be home in a few.

But they say I'll get over the cold, till I need to do is cope and appreciate the beauty and wonders of America.

But I don't think so. Day after day, I feel more depressed. I can't see beauty here. To me, to live is to be back home in the Philippines with my wife and my son whom I think of so much night and day. Now I know the loneliness and despair of the overseas Filipino workers have to endure just to earn money.

Just a few weeks after I arrived in America, a Filipino-American asked me if I was going back to the Philippines. When I said yes, he told me, "You are crazy man!" He pointed out the huge disparity between this nation I was residing in and my country. I could cave in the US. I told him money wasn't everything.

But after some reflection, I realized I am again facing another conundrum here in life. Here I am studying in earn a degree so that I could give my family a better future, and yet I want to go back home and abandon it to pursue so that I can be with them. I want a better life and yet I don't want to work in the US where my chances of achieving that goal are much better. For those whom I look inside myself, I hear a voice calling me: "I love my country. I just have all the believing that is going on." I guess that in my own way, I am patriotic. What the time comes, I will start saving my back in the upper luxury to live the American dream.

Marco A. Galang, 27, is an assistant professor at the University of the Philippines Los Baños. He is currently studying for his his Ph.D. degree at the University of Georgia.

YOUNG BLOOD

Marco A. Galang

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? By inclusive contributions from the twenty-something and below.—Ed.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

If you are sending your contributions by e-mail, please do so to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address and telephone number. If you are still in school, name and year you're enrolled in or if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with.

Bringing back the trains

AT LARGE
Rina Jimenez-David

I AM old enough to remember an era when to Baguio, encountering along Kennon Road a caravan of black limousines that, so my parents told me, were service conferring first-class train passengers who had gotten off at that destination, to be whisked, in my young mind, to the Mansion. Because Jimenez became general manager of the Philippine National Railways in the 1970s, I would join my parents on those same trips, getting off at Dagupan en our way to my mother's hometown of Lingayen, Pangasinan.

Students of history might well remember that the North Luzon train line is the same line that was managed in the late 1800s by the Englishman who earned local famous Brazil, Don Benito Tiong Bian.

Long before the Spanish era, the railroad was constructed to link the provinces of Northern Luzon to Metro Manila, trains provided a vital artery, ferrying passengers and cargo from as far north as La Union to Manila and, if needed, all the way south to Legazpi. Unfortunately, in the 20 years since we took what would turn out to be among the last railroad runs to Northern Luzon, the northern lines were abandoned in favor of an expanding network of roads, leaving the entire province of not just the Northern Luzon Expressway but also a system of highways all the way to the southernmost province of Cagayan.

Nowadays, there's talk once more of reviving trains on the old tracks, with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) reportedly ready to provide some P2 billion for the project's various phases. Interested among these features is the use of a double track, which will not only prevent collisions but also cut travel time. Also planned is the construction of a high rail line, which will provide a passage to prevent earthquakes along the necessary easements, but also for the safety of both the train system and the surrounding public.

With construction of Phase 1 scheduled to begin this month, Cesar Saruca Jr., the project's leading for the final clearance of informal settlements along the original ROW line in Malabon and Valenzuela, then through Bulacan. Funded by a soft loan of $120 million from the Japanese government, the North Rail project is expected to run the length from Caloocan to Malolos for Phase 1, Section 1, and then from Malolos to Clark Special Economic Zone for the second section. Phase 2 covers San Fernando to Tutuban, while Subic (via Clark) and Batangas (via Calamba to Sto. Tomas) are Phase 4 from Clark to San Fernando, La Union.

As Cortez explains it, once completed in estimated by 2008, North Rail will serve three purposes: as a commuter line for residents of Bulacan to Metro Manila; as a special transport service for airline passengers to and from Port Area/Manila and the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Clark; and to ferry passengers and cargo to and from Manila and the Freeport Zones in Subic, Clark and the rest of Northern Luzon. Once completed, North Rail foresees being able to bridge the distance from Metro Manila to La Union in as little as four hours!

ONE of the biggest issues being raised against North Rail at this time is the number of urban poor families who will be dislocated. Concerns have been raised about the company's plans for the relocation of communities that have been living for years along the railroad tracks, and whether adequate facilities have been offered them in exchange for vacating the easement properties.

Cortez stresses that the relocation of the railroad communities is primarily the responsibility of local governments which have received funding from North Rail to carry out the demolition of the dummy houses and the relocation of the residents affected by the project. Assisting them are the National Housing Authority or the construction of low-cost houses in the resettlement sites.

It must be stressed that railway lines have great revenue-earners primarily for safety reasons. It has always been considered a safer mode of transportation and for the residents to have safety concerns arising right on the edge of train tracks. That will be commendable here aiming up all along the busier sections of our railways in pursuit of the latter, and of national governments, as well as our consideration for public safety.

I only hope those legislators sitting in block the North Rail project by citing the welfare of the families to be dislocated don't mean to suggest that zone of those living along the railways should be allowed to remain where they are. This is not only reckless, but prejudice to its worst form. Sometimes, we just have to bite the bullet if we want progress to take place.

Is the AFP still effective? (2)

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY
Ramón J. Harper

TO BE fair, government has never had a good record for maintenance. All you need to do is look at public buildings to realize that either there is no allocation for maintenance or that funds are used elsewhere. It isn't surprising then that a key recommendation of the Philippine Defense Review addresses the AFP's poor record of equipment maintenance.

The Defense Review admits that based on down helicopters from the OS are commonly being cannibalized to keep the remaining ones flying. They also report that of eight C-130s in the fleet numbering, including two mothballed by the Cabinet Peace Caravan, only two are serviceable in November 2003, only two are still "mission capable." Some months ago, a C-130 burst its tires upon landing at Subic and nine national flights were delayed for the six hours it took for them to be replaced!

As of last month, the fleet of helicopters had dwindled up to a total of 225, but only 26 percent or 61 are operational. Out of the remaining 150, 109 are "grounded." Nearly half of the aircraft in the OSP's fleet were rendered useless.

Some of these 109 aircraft were mothballed because they are already obsolete, parts are no longer available for repair or because they were simply worn out due to excessive use. However, a good number of grounded aircraft and helicopters are the victims of cannibalized aircraft. In the Air Force.

Fifty-four SAF planes and helicopters are "pulled" for inspection and maintenance. The OSG claims these are "unpossible" because its budget provides for the purchase of spare parts for the AFP's total personnel budget is P16.2 billion, less down cuts P16 billion for personnel (78 percent), P0.2billion for maintenance and other operation expenses (22 percent), and a token P0.1 million for capital outlay (0.6 percent). It is the budget for maintenance is insufficient. Sen. Miriam Santiago asserts that the allocation for maintenance is for gems for "conversion".

AFP procurement scandals have been exposed by Congressman Antonio Trillanes. A recent scandal involving Congressman Antonio Trillanes. A recent scandal involving Congressman Antonio Trillanes. A recent scandal involving

Crunch time for GMA

FEW quite some time, it has been public knowledge that many high- and middle-ranking government officials—civilian and military—abuse their positions to enrich themselves.

The House of Representatives and the Senate have long ago stopped serving the interests of the people. Presidential appointees take lengths for false 2 years duration when tenure is coterminous with the appointing official.

Millions of pesos of public money being crashed abroad by the corrupt, poor Filipinos are, in effect, helping the economies of some developed countries. This is economic sabotage in its highest form, committed by thieves disguised as public servants. Now their want to raise the stakes: Declare their honest and hard-working Filipino citizens with more and higher taxes so they can maintain their despicable lifestyles.

If President Macapagal-Arroyo truly wants to correct the deficiency, she must embarrass all the bank accounts and the property of all those who are wealthy beyond their incomes. We can recover the revenue from the sort money have during her. The guilty should be put in jail. Maybe, she should consider forgetting due process, since her boss Senator is also a supporter of her wholesale molestation.

—EMMANUEL BONAVENTURA
emmanuelbon@yahoo.com

Rewarding whistle-blowers in gov't

LEVEL servants who report the corrupt practices of co-workers to the Ombudsman perform a heroic act worthy of our recognition. They deserve to be included in the search for outstanding public officials and employees. They deserve to get the highest honor award conferred on civil servants by the President, which consists of a plaque, medallion, P100,000 and automatic promotion to the next highest position.

Republic Act No. 6713, creating the Ombudsman to oversee Legal Protection Service, should provide their moral support, free housing, livelihood assistance, salaries and travel allowances, and schooling for their children, in addition to enjoying immunity from prosecution and protection against harassment or discrimination at work. The same bill already seeks to entitle civil servants who earn kickbacks or misdirect favor of allowance and full payment of wages and benefits while acting as witnesses.

Indeed, civil servants need no longer recite at more figures in mediocre, they now have the means of checking on known or suspected bullies in the conspicuous men of the Philippine nation.

—ED ALEGRE,
23-A Banaag St.,
South Fairview, Quezon City

In same boat with but not pro-military

TO BE in reaction to a story in your newspaper which reported that the Alliance for National Democracy (Anad) is against military intervention. (PDI, 12/20/04) After to an entire delightful newspaper his activities.

1. Anad is a pro-democracy alliance that is waging a peaceful struggle to restore democracy in the country. In such exercise is the communist terrorists' methodology in members believe in exhausting the masses and strongly defend the use of force and violence. The masses of Filipinos are weapons on deception, intimidation and harassment of our hapless civilians, especially those in the countryside. They manipulate our youth and workers, attention is the public and private sectors, or create their own organizations like the so-called Bayan Muna, Anak Bayan, Gabriela, etc. which clearly are fronts of the communist terrorists' party-list groups, i.e. Bayan Muna, Anak Bayan and Gabriela.

2. While clearly condemning its efforts with the military and police, Anad does not derive any benefit from the Armed Forces of the Philippines or the government. And neither has the government or the military resorted to Rodrigo Aquino to its activities.

If the military and Anad are "in the same boat," so to speak, it is simply because we have a common objective of preserving and protecting our freedoms, rights and democratic institutions.

Knowing the expertise and skills of the communist-terrorists (CPP-NPA-NDF) in manipulating public opinion to their advantage, we are not surprised that some of your correspondents might now be their propaganda tools.

—ROBERT SALONGA,
national media affairs,
Alliance for National Democracy,
QUIRINO,
anddphil@yahoo.com

THE STORY did not say that Anad was being funded by the military. If Anad is not pro-military, then why is it condemning the same lines as the military? We are not saying your correspondent writing for the communists. However, we are aware that, almost always, the opposing sides of the conflict use reporters to disseminate ways and policies.

—ALLAN SAMSE,
desk editor,
PDI Mindanao Bureau

Angara not of the opposition

THE NEWS on Sen. Edgardo Angara's running mate calculations (Nov. 10) doesn't not surprise anybody. Bistek—and perhaps long before—the current presidential ambitions, Angara's attraction as a member of the opposition (minority) was obviously suspect.

His story, which was supposed to be personal and private, became the basis of the Supreme Court decision declaring moot President Joseph Estrada offensively resigned. Since that is a matter of public debate and confidential documents found its way into a newspaper. Who leaked it to the media? And to exchange for what?

In the recent presidential election, he chose a non-party membership to carry the standard of his party instead of a party mate. His statement caused the division of the opposition and its eventual loss in the election.

To reiterate, it is no longer a surprise that Angara is switching parties. In fact, he is not switching parties because he has been with the administration all along.

—ROBERT L. CARON
#12 J. Eclarin,
Makati City

> If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of cases and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Imperial Street, Makati Avenue, City of Makati or send a fax to 896-6217, 897-4793, 897-4795 or e-mail (readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph).
>
> Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Let us be honest or we will perish

IN 2003, a TV interview, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo asked the media to help in easing the prevailing tension gripping the nation by discouraging rumor-mongering and celebrating the attitude of patriotism. Media's response—and perhaps long before—the current presidential elections, Angara's attraction as a member of the opposition (minority) was obviously suspect.

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—ROBERT L. CARON
#12 J. Eclarin,
Makati City

Inutile against corruption

"LPG: up P30.80/Cylinder." This was the headline of one line 'lil in one of the inquirers. Now how the surging power rates will help ameliorate a good will inquirer this Christmas," Malacañang advised the public over as the cost of living continues to impoverish more and more countries.

Along with the soaring prices of oil products and power rates, the cost of basic commodities will be more also increase. How can an ordinary Filipino, without going into billions of any daily wage, dream of a "Merry Christmas"?

Going back to the above-mentioned from Malacañang, is much encouragement when it tells in a serving talents corrupt public officials inutile in many while most Filipinos are struggling to make both ends meet in a daily struggle for survival. Why shall unidentified, Malacañang only mobilizes that is counted in its fight against corruption, which is one of the major causes of the economic miseries we are experiencing today.

—ROMEO CORONEL G. FREITAS
student, De La Salle University
123 Scholastic Road
Al Homes Las Piñas City

Too poor, too overcrowded

WE are repeatedly told that population explosion has nothing to do with poverty in the Philippines; that poverty is an offshoot of the unequal distribution of wealth due to corruption.

As a consumer of late, in this area it's, we all suffer from the worst kind of poverty—the poverty of the mind. Otherwise, if we were blessed with rich minds, we would not find ourselves poor.

Two poor to solve the problems of our overcrowded homes, jeeps, trains, planes, and ships.

Too poor to solve the problem of our overcrowded hospitals and health clinics and cemeteries.

Too poor to solve the problem of our overcrowded schools, colleges, and universities.

Too poor to solve the problem of civic overcrowded towns, jeeps, trains, planes, and ships.

Too poor to solve the problem of our overcrowded land, sea, and highways.

Too poor to solve the problem of our overcrowded land, sea, and highways.

Too poor to solve the problem of our overcrowded land, sea, and highways

Across the NATION

Violence mars Luisita strike dispersal

By Ronaldo Olcoer
PDI Central Luzon Desk

HACIENDA LUISITA, Tarlac City—Violence marred the dispersal by police of a strike by workers of the Hacienda Luisita, resulting in injuries to strikers and policemen.

Leaders of the strikers said at least 200 protesters were hurt. Police said 50 of their men were also injured in the violence.

Violence erupted at 1:45 a.m. when 1,000 policemen in anti-riot gear moved in to disperse around 6,000 strikers and their sympathizers who were manning up in front of the Hacienda Luisita gate.

The pushing and shoving escalated into nightstick beating, stone throwing and stabbing.

Among those severely wounded was Ricardo Ramos, General Association de Tarlac Labor Union (Catlu) president, who was hit with a stone in the head. He was rushed to the Tarlac Provincial Hospital for treatment.

Rene Galang, United Luisita Workers Union (Uluwi) president, suffered bruises in the right arm when he was hit with a police truncheon.

In a statement sent to the Inquirer, Jose Sonsuerga, Luisita spokesperson, said the dispersal operation was a "legitimate exercise of state power."

"The work stoppage is illegal and Left-inspired," he said.

"Only a handful (of workers) have been participating in it. As confirmed by a number of the people at the picket line are outsiders who came from as far as Nueva Ecija ... and have nothing to do with the business operations of CAT and Hacienda Luisita."

The strikers repulsed the police dispersal attempt after a 15-minute scuffle.

Also seriously hurt were two police officers who were taken to a nearby mobile hospital.

Director Quirico de la Fuente, Philippine National Police regional director, said they were ordered by the Department of Labor and Employment to disperse the striking workers and their supporters who had barricaded the seven gates leading to the CAT.

Senior Supt. Amado Pascado, police deputy regional director for administration, said the protesters used air pellets to and two police officers.

The workers were demanding higher wages and better benefits, but Sonsuerga said the agenda was "to topple the business operations of the two firms."

SILHOUETTE-ING Arroyo at the feast of the Virgen La Naval in Bacolor, Pampanga, this morning before leaving the region. (PDI, Pinatubo: The President hailed the town's and its people as an example of how Filipinos could survive any crisis after another. But she also said she would be unpopular temporarily while she pursues unpopular policies. (See story below.)

Pampanga town used as sample of how RP will survive crisis

By Tonyton Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

BACOLOR, Pampanga—Still trying to inspire optimism among Filipinos amid the economic crisis, President Macapagal-Arroyo on Tuesday said the recovery of this town, a town buried by Mt. Pinatubo's 1991 eruption and surrounding lahar flows, has become a symbol that the Philippines can survive the "final challenges."

"I am optimistic about our nation and our people. And for those who do not believe, to those who doubt, I say visit Bacolor for you will see the strength of the Filipino. Visit Bacolor as you can see how Filipinos rise from a crisis," the President said in a speech that marked the start of the town's 210th feast of the Virgen La Naval.

It was the president's first celebration since 1991 when Mt. Pinatubo's lahar began burying the town's 22 villages, thereby won the Philippines' capital during the fourth invasion in the 16th century and ruin Pampanga's capital until 1994.

Ms Arroyo, who arrived here at past 2 p.m. on Saturday, was the first President to grace the feast after the Mt. Pinatubo eruptions, Mayor Romeo Dungca said.

"How Bacolor managed to overcome the disaster is what I want to show the Filipinos that is why I came here today, especially now that our country is faced by a big challenge," the President told some 2,000 people gathered at a local gymnasium.

She said she wants to set a "common mind" and there is only one path to take to turn the economy around.

Budget discipline, generation of new revenues and the easing out of corruption comprised that path guided by her administration's 10-point agenda.

She told her Ambuklao (governance matter) to bear with her and support her.

"I want to stress that we are not turning away from taking the hard decisions but in the meantime, your Kapampangan Presidente will become very unpopular for a while," she said, citing the pressure and destabilization efforts against her administration.

Speaking to Filipinos, she said: "In the end, these decisions are one ways to bring us to victory to attain our 10-point agenda."

After detailing the thrusts of that agenda, she explained the three items needed to achieve fiscal consolidation. These were raising taxes (sins) alcohol, cigarettes and tobacco, rationalizing fiscal incentives; and rewarding revenue performers and punishing those not able to do well.

She said she expected that the first six items this tax measures would reach her double generation enable the government to generate an additional P60 billion next year.

In 2005, she said the government will make concerted efforts to reduce the consolidated public sector debt.

She said the government will absorb the P200-million debt of the National Power Corp., pay its interest expense of P20 billion and pay the principal to lessen the total debt.

Privatization, she explained, was important, referring to government's plan for Napocor.

The Napocor's transmission assets, she added, will be sold for P118 billion.

She said Filipinos, "temporarily," would have to bear with increases in power rates.

She thinks that underwent adversities, she said the government would be on track in its deficit reduction program. It took long for Bacolor to rise again. At least 11 years after as much as nine meters of lahar buried the town, half of Bacolor now has roads, bridges, electricity, water, schools, churches, clinics and barangay halls.

The Don Honorio Ventura College of Arts and Studies, the oldest vocational school in Asia, has not stopped operating.

Some 3,000 families have permanently settled in the town with Dungca's "return to the homeplace" program.

Food coupons to reach poor in E. Visayas

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Some 10,000 families of the most depressed provinces in Eastern Visayas will benefit from the government's food-for-work program.

Gov. Bon Evardone of Eastern Samar said the formal launching of the program will be held at the provincial capitol in Borongan town on Nov. 22.

Eastern Samar, which is composed of 23 towns, is the only province in the Visayas that will benefit from the program.

The big number of families living below the poverty line and widespread malnutrition were the primary factors being considered for an area to be included in the program.

Coverage

Evardone said the program initially covered only 18 towns, benefiting 18,000 families. These were San Policarpo, Maslog, Llorente, Arteche, Can-avid, Oras, Quinapondan, Salcedo, Mayabolong and Dolores.

But the Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan (Kalahi) regional convergence group chaired by Victor Jennings, presidential assistant for Eastern Visayas, decided to widen the coverage of the food coupon program and make it province-wide to integrate in the cluster of the support of the other towns.

Kalahi was formed to support the program and serve as its conduit.

The beneficiaries, however, will still be limited to 10,000 families, who will be identified by the town mayors. The national government has earmarked P72 million for the implementation of the program in Eastern Samar.

Evardone said he would have to make sure that those who deserve to benefit from the program will be given the food coupons" that can be obtained from the town's social welfare office.

SEVENTY-YEAR-OLD Felicisimo Bajenia, resident of the Oras area in Eastern Sam. displays the food coupon he received from the government. The same coupons were to be distributed in the poor in the Visayas.
INQ PHOTO

Priority

To be given priority are single parents; families with children ages 0-6; families with five or more members; families with chronically ill members; and families with older persons and disabled members.

In the next six months, these families will be provided food coupons worth P1,200. These coupons can be exchanged for rice, cooking oil, mongo, dried fish, sugar, sardines, noodles and salt in participating grocery stores or supermarkets.

The beneficiaries will render community service in exchange for the coupons.

Groceries and supermarkets have to be accredited to be able to distribute food items for the beneficiaries of the food coupon program.

"And that is what makes the program different from previous programs of the government with the same purpose. This is not a meal [distressed] to them. They would work in exchange for their food coupons," said Evardone.

P1.6B in smuggled rice entered RP, says sectoral rep

ILOILO CITY—An estimated P1.6 billion worth of smuggled rice landed in different ports of the country in the last three years, Rep. Rafael Mariano of the militant party-list group Anakpawis said yesterday.

Rosse Bendaliun/Sin 244 filed by Mariano and two other leftist lawmakers cited records from the Bureau of Customs that, from January to December 2003, a total of 1,623,438 bags of smuggled rice were found in different ports of the country.

In the BOC report, according to Mariano, the port in Batangas City confiscated 28,600 bags; Cagayan de Oro, 8,987 bags; Davao, 69,833 bags; Iloilo, 61,487 bags; Legaspi, 107,661 bags; Manila, 144,200 bags; Manila International Container Port, 68,000 bags; Subic Bay, 40,000 bags; Subic, 256,600 bags; Tacloban, 32,435 bags; and Zamboanga, 411 bags, among other ports.

In year 2002, Mariano said, the agency obtained a total of 235,731 bags of smuggled rice.

Of these, the congressman said, 130,476 bags were seized in the port of Cebu; 126,738 bags in Manila; 39,000 bags at the Manila International Container Port; 2,130 bags in Iloilo; 393 bags in Batangas; 37,811 bags in Tacloban, and 9,499 bags in Zamboanga.

Mariano also said that last year, the BOC were able to seize 233,731 bags of smuggled rice nationwide. In Batangas, the government agency found 22,890 bags; Cebu, 33,240 bags; Davao, 9,544 bags; Manila, 35,389 bags; Manila International Container Port, 59,881 bags, and Zamboanga, 41,439 bags.

"In just three years, the agency apprehended [at] 1,647,481 bags of smuggled rice with an estimated value of P1.6 billion [at P1,000 per bag]," he added.

Systematic

Mariano said the concrete figures showed "that systematic rice smuggling has been institutionalized in the country."

"It is already long overdue for Congress to take measures and humiliate actions to stop the rampant rice smuggling in the country and protect millions of rice farmers from its killing impacts," he added.

The peasant leader also said that aside from the "liquidated" rice smuggling through the Arroyo administration's policy of rice importation, the systematic and multi-billion smuggling operations by rice cartels further push down the prices of locally produced palay or unhulled rice.

"It seems that rice smugglers enjoy protection even from within the Arroyo government," he said. (With T. Molbet Jr., PDI Iloilo's Lucas Parreño)

Survey shows there's hope vs 'jueteng'

DAGUPAN CITY... There's hope, after all, for the illegal numbers game "jueteng" so he it-ked.

A recent survey by the Kusog Bayan Laban sa Jueteng (People's Crusade Against Jueteng) conducted in three Pangasinan towns showed that jueteng operations are "non-existent."

The survey, held in Pangasinan's 44 towns and four cities last month, showed that jueteng does not exist in Anda, Bolinao and Bani, all in the western part of the province. It also showed that the game was "negligible" in Binalonan and Balungao towns.

In earlier interviews, Bani Mayor Gabriel Narzoles and Burgos Mayor Domingo Duenas said they merely refused to allow operations of jueteng financiers as they didn't want progressive towns to become hotbeds.

The survey however, showed that the illegal game was still rampant in many Pangasinan towns and "moderate" in others.

Urdaneta-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, Rotarian titans and former governors of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, said confidence in the towns refused to answer the survey forms. He did not say how many residents answered the forms.

Cruz said the survey was undertaken in coordination with the different religious and civic organizations and with the cooperation of "true-to-form" government employees in some instances.

He said the rating "negligible" meant that jueteng was "by and large rarely noticed in the place." By "moderate," respondents means the game was limited to specific areas, and "rampant" means the game was widespread.

Cruz said the survey results are open for verification.

"In the event that any voting given to any municipality, locality and city is grossly wrong, then (I ask for) the forgiveness of all those concerned," the bishop said.

Cruz, in a letter to Gov. Victor Agbayani and Dr. Jorge Macle Bandoyo, Pangasinan police director, said the Church is one of the three pillars in the fight against "something that is illegal, immoral and shameful."

He said the other pillars are the governor (or local officials) and the police director (or local police chiefs).

"Jueteng can either be non-existent or operative when the three pillars are committed to stop (jueteng operations. [from] plying their corrupt and corrupting trade in their jurisdiction," he said.

"(Jueteng) would be our embarrassment and the scandal of many decent and hard-working people unless we commit ourselves to (fight) it (and) all other illegal and criminal activities," Cruz said.

Agbayani said he hoped the national government would come out with a "treatment law on gambling."

Some municipal leaders do not want to legalize jueteng. "Then it should declare as illegal the other gambling activities like cockfighting and lotto," he said.

Agbayani said the fight against jueteng should be a collective effort among provincial and town officials, the police and the people. (Orlando Olarte, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau)

ROUNDUP

Cell phone thief fall

GUIMBA CITY—For has arrested a suspect who stole a cellular phone and money from a businesswoman in Barangay Pamael here on Tuesday night. The 37-year-old suspect from Barangay Sto. Cristo Norte was identified by Mariflor L. Cabi, 28, saleswoman of Barangay Pamael, police said. PO1 Ronnie P. Cuevas said his team recovered the cell phone and an ice pick from the suspect. Cuevas added said illegal possession of ice picks is also a violation of the Republic Act (RA) No. 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. —Ronnel Peña, PDI Contributor Leon Dorao

Stolen rail tracks seized

CAMP OLIVAS AL LUCIANITO, Subic— Police seized about P200,000 worth of stolen rail tracks materials from the Philippine National Railways in Mariveles town on Nov. 10. Supt. Fernando Hilario, chief of the Bataan police's mobile group, said the stolen tracks were seized with a six-wheeler truck. Two suspects were arrested in connection with the theft. The suspects identified as Mark Ambos in Mariveles and Rodolfo Ramos, both in their early 40s, in Barangay Cabcaben, Mariveles, in connection with the theft. Hilario said the suspects admitted that they stole the tracks materials from the railroad tracks in Barangay Alangan, Mariveles, in early August. Chief Insp. Rhoel Reginaldo, Mariveles chief of police, said the suspects admitted that they sold the tracks materials to the owners of the stolen tracks, a piece of which is roughly 2,000 kilograms. Reginaldo said the complaint against the suspects will be filed on Nov. 17. The suspects would be taken to Tanay in Rizal, Reginaldo told the police. —Lucinda Dayao, PDI CONTRIBUTOR, BATAAN

Ephedrine seized at Clark

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Around 6.3 kilograms of ephedrine, a key ingredient in the manufacture of shabu, were seized here on Friday. Two men containing the substance were addressed to Mother Up of Sta. Cruz Manila, according to Supt. Antonio Rodriguez, chief of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency in Central Luzon. The two, contacted at the LBC Express-Sun Jet parcel-only warehousing office here, was found for by's general merchandise store. The driving source Manila. It was seized after its consignee, identified as Gina Ofilas, claimed it at the office. PDEA agents arrested the consignee's driver, Dante Ortiz and Dante Mendoza. The three said they were to distribute it. their employer, to pick up a package of unspecified merchandise. The shipment, which originated from Manila to China, came from one Michael Ang Ofilas from the PDEA and the Bureau of Customs (Bureau). —Lucinda Dayao, PDI CONTRIBUTOR, PAMPANGA

Salen vs mining

CITY OF OLAMBA—General Mariano Pino Medellin, Malacañang has assured the Lumad of a resolution regarding the encroachment of Lumad ancestral lands by mining companies by upholding rights of consolidation between Royal Tagabawa Mining Corp. vs Bienvenido Pendatun Memorandum No. 167 2000-01, Malacañang said that such a ruling did not prejudice the rights of the Lumad to their ancestral lands. —Editor / Malaya Jr. /PDI Contributor Lucinda Dayao

Counseling vs drugs

ILIGAN CITY—Another drug group has come over counseling to surrender the drug menace. Jacinto Rabanes, who heads the Anti-Drug Abuse Council here, said they have formed some counseling groups, composed of student leaders, to counsel and help the drug addicts with drug problems, to surrendered along with the drug lords, including 400 enforcement officers from the anti-drug abuse council and other government agencies. Rabanes said the group has been organized to help rehabilitated drug dependents go back to school and become productive citizens. —Melvin Gallardo, PDI Mindanao Bureau

3 soldiers hurt in clash

DAVAO CITY—Three soldiers, including an Army officer, were wounded during an encounter Wednesday morning in Lupon town in Davao Oriental's Valley. The military reported Lt. Col. Agapito Rebanal, chief of the 28th Infantry Battalion (IB) of the Eastern Mindanao Command, and other wounded soldiers were Capt. Lito Bernardo, and sergeants Ernesto Mendoza and Rolando Rubio of the 4th Special Forces Company. Rebanal is said to have been hit in the left leg while leading the Philippine Army troops (PA) in the encounter with the New People's Army rebels under Ka Bong Bagani Command. Chief Supt. Rolando Asuncion, Eastern Mindanao Command chief, ordered the Philippine National Police (PNP) and other government agencies to help rehabilitated drug dependents go back to school and become productive citizens. —Antonio Colmenar, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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Marijuana uprooted

CAVALI CITY—Anti-drug anti-terrorist agents, backed by soldiers and policemen, climbed mountains and hills Monday after being transported to the remote villages of Silvinian, Davao del Sur province Thursday, police said. A policeman and a soldier were injured when the climbers, belonging to mixed bandit group, fired on a helicopter carrying the agents. The helicopter was not damaged but the injured police and soldiers were flown to the capital. Davao del Sur Assembly area is considered lawless. Supt. Simeon Dioso, Davao del Sur Provincial police chief, informed the press of the operation in a statement at PTA. —Antonio J. Aduja, PDI Mindanao Bureau

WIDESPREAD
Signs that the holidays are drawing near are sprouting all over, like these lights being arranged by residents on Evaristo Serrano in Cebu City

NPA rebs kill 2 unarmed soldiers

DAVAO CITY—At least two soldiers were killed in another attack perpetrated by the New People's Army (NPA) in Southern Mindanao, the military reported yesterday.

Col. Edmardo del Rosario, commander of the Task Force Davao, said four unarmed soldiers under the 73rd Infantry Battalion were walking to their detachment in Barangay Inquiton in Talaingod, Davao del Norte on Sunday afternoon when fired upon by an undetermined number of NPA rebels.

Del Rosario confirmed one of the soldiers died on the spot. He said another soldier was wounded and another escaped unharmed.

Del Rosario said the Task Force Davao was sent to track down the rebels, believed to be members of the 50th Front Guerrilla Unit 25 operating in the boundaries of Talaingod and Baganihan district here.

On Saturday, NPA rebels also killed at least three policemen in Bagangan, Davao Oriental, during an early morning raid on a police outpost. —Anthony S. Alcaide, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Pampanga execs seek GMA help on NLEx toll increase

CLARK FIELD, Pampanga—The provincial board has asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to intervene in what it describes as exorbitant toll rate adjustments set to be imposed by the Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC) along the North Luzon Expressway (NLEx) by Dec. 15 this year.

Board Member Tarcisio Rodil said he said from Board Member Aurelio Garcia Jr. had submitted to Ms. Arroyo during her visit here on Sunday their position paper containing facts and figures on why the Legaspi group-led MNTC should refrain from charging motorists each 500 to 700 percent toll rates.

The proposal will see along the NLEx toll fee hike of 25 centavos per kilometer for small vehicles but was adjusted in July this year to 33 centavos per km by the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC), the corporate predecessor of the expressway.

The new rates by the middle of next month would be P2.49 per km for small vehicles, P5.25 per km for light trucks and buses, and P7.47 per km for heavy trucks.

Under the MNTC rates, small vehicles would have to pay a one-way toll of about P200 for the entire 84-kilometer stretch of NLEx, buses and light trucks P525, and heavy trucks P927.

"There is no 700 percent toll rate increase was announced by the MNTC in January or the height of its P16-bil. line rehabilitation and improvement work along the NLEx.

The NLEx is scheduled to take over from the PNCC the management and operation of the expressway on Dec. 15, according to Marlene Ochoa, MNTC assistant vice president for public information and external relations.

Habli said it would be hard for motorists or shoulder the increased toll rates. "Prices are hundreds of kabalosian to the City of San Fernando, which is a distance of only about 30 km, you have to pay P56 toll fee. That's only one-way fee. You have to pay another P56 on your way home. We used to pay only P6 for the distance but now it is already P56. It is not much for motorists," he added.

During a public hearing on the NLEx toll rate last month, the board members also declared the MNTC contract to collect toll rates unfeasible, saying about they said the "unequal" development along the expressway.

They echoed Vice Gov. Eduardo Gutierrez's call for a "pro-rated" toll policy, instead of charging a uniform and as-used P3.49 per km. maximum toll rate.

They said unlike in Bulacan where the NLEx was widened from four to six and eight lanes and installed with road lights, the expressway in Pampanga portion was only overlaid with asphalt and no widening or lighting work was undertaken.

Habli said he hoped Ms. Arroyo would do something about the predicament of her provincemates by overturning the Supreme Court (SC) decision upholding the Toll Regulatory Board with the MNTC.

The TRB, approved by former President Fidel Ramos in June 1998, set behind the MNTC to collect only 25 centavos per km for small vehicles, plus said other light vehicles.

But MNTC officials led by then president, former Public Works Secretary Jose de Jesus, said the 12 centavos per km was not to P2.49 per km because of the price depreciation and inflation rates since 1998. Jun Ablaña, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Sugar planters to tap Landbank for ₱12-B loan

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Negros Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—A top official of the Land Bank of the Philippines expressed willingness to discuss with sugar planters a plan to create the Sugar Farmers Marketing Corp. that would buy sugar at unsold prices to prevent prices from falling further.

"I certainly would like to help the sugar industry. He can look into what is possible," said Lok Lorenzo, Land Bank chair said after presidential adviser on sugar concerns.

Sugar leaders were planning to meet with LBP president Gary Tross on Thursday to avail of a P1.5-billion loan to fund the marketing corporation.

Manuel Lizares, president of the United Sugar Producers Federation of the Philippines (Unifed), said if the bank could not provide the entire amount, they would top up the help of the Philippine Sugar Millers Association of the Philippines and the Philippine National Bank.

The Unifed has been meeting with Bicon coffee Inden alliance to map out the creation of the marketing corporation that would ensure reasonable prices of sugar, free from the control of traders.

Under the proposed setup, the marketing arm will buy sugar from planters at P800 to P850 per 50-kilo bag (bg) and will sell them to the traders.

"If we do not do this and prices continue to be manipulated, the sugar industry will die," said Lizares.

Prices of sugar on Thursday suffered a slight drop from P900 per bg last week to P865. The palace rates below production cost of P900 bg.

Physics profs say no evidence cell sites harmful

DUMAGUETE CITY—Two physics professors from Silliman University have emerged from about the threat of radiation caused by towers of cellular phones.

Professors Vicente Montes and Francisco Abling told the Dumaguete City Council during their regular session on Thursday that the so-called radiation coming from cell phones and cell sites is different from the radiation caused by X-rays.

Their opinion was sought following a standoff in the city council over the application of Sun Cellular for a permit to construct a cell site in the city.

The application of Sun Cellular to build a 60-m tower in Barangay Calindagan and Bantayan Bunawan raised suspicions of a health threat.

Montes explained the councilors to exercise their prerogative in deciding on the matter, as there was no scientific evidence that cell phones were harmful to users' health because X-rays are relatively low gadgets.

Abling cited studies conducted by the US Federal Communication Commission, and the World Health Organization that showed no direct evidence linking cell phones to health hazards.

He also cited a memorandum from Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit that "present scientific knowledge not convinces studies ... showed inconclusive evidence that ... cellular phone transmitters can cause harm." —Alex B. Paz, PDI Visayas Bureau

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COOLING is our BUSINESS.

US Army reduces number of troops in war games

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—The US military started down the number of troops and shortened its participation in the Talon Vision-04 exercises, which opened here Monday, due to cyber communications overseas, including Iraq, officials said.

Only 70 US Marine personnel from the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force based in Okinawa joined the training, which was to last until Nov. 19, said a joint statement by the exercise co-directors, Philippine Air Force Col. Andres Largo and US Marine Corps. Maj. Peter Calogero.

"Current operations around the world are keeping the US military busy," brig. Michael Mastro, JTMS media coordinator, told reporters.

His counterpart, Capt. Joselito Mateo, said while Talon Vision was known as the "little Balikatan," the activities of the US military abroad caused it to reduce its participants to less than one-fourth.

Past Talon Vision exercises, also held under the Mutual Forces Agreement since 2001, used to involve more than 500 troops from both countries.

Balikatan is an large-scale war games involving more than 1,000 troops.

The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, also based in Okinawa sent only a C-130 plane for the week-long training on aviation mission and safety.

Many US troops were young recruits, it was learned.

At least 175 troops from the PAF, Philippine Marines and Philippine National Police were also in the exercises.

"The exercise aims to enhance the JAF concerted defense and cabinet support capabilities through combined air and ground operations exercises," Largo and Calogero said in the statements. *Jessel le Grajeta, PDN Contributor/ Lauren Krisch*

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MUSLIMS celebrate the end of Ramadan in San Jose, Metro Manila. Weeks earlier in North Cotabato, former Muslim guerrillas celebrated an end to their adherence to Ramadan as a means to achieve independence. *MARI SARAO*

Ex-rebs take Ramadan break for peace bid

KIAMBONG CITY—Bugoya Ambi did not mind the heat despite her dried up lips and mouth and empty stomach.

She however been taking food or fluids because she was fasting as with other Muslims.

But Salik, chief of North Cotabato's Special Assistant and Development Program (SADP), joined a ramazan hunt, which former Moro guerrillas view as a sign of the government's resolve for peace.

Former MNLF leader Dayo Emma Sandal, who was also forming like Salik, joined the ramazan.

The two prominent Moro figures in North Cotabato agreed that joining the ramazan was a symbol of the effort and sacrifice because it brought a message of peace in a province now being updated by controversies and possible division.

"I would like to say myself, somehow this is my way of discovering my inner strength while advocating the power and understanding among the people in the province," Salik said.

The ramazan's destination was the Limbahan complex, an area in Carmen, North Cotabato, which became site of fierce battles between Moro rebels and soldiers in the past.

With the ramazan, which was also participated in by ranking government officials, were some 90 million worth of farm implements—at least 63 hand-tractors, 49 floating tillers and 154 sprayers, which were later distributed to former rebels who turned to farming.

The farm equipment were part of the social component of the Bongo-based Mulondog Mawitagan irrigation program.

North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Pifiol said the purchase of the equipment was concrete proof of the government's concern for the people in the complex.

"This is the time to rebuild the lives of Muslims and Christians in the province. This is the time to end the war in Mindanao," the governor, who was being stereotyped as an anti-Muslim hater, said. *Jeffrey M. Tupas, PDN Mindanao Bureau*

Question of the Week

Do you think President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is addressing the fiscal crisis with effective solutions? Why or why not?

Senders of a first 10 texts published in Tuesday's InqBox *will each receive an "Inquirer T-shirt!"*

Text your answers to 2387 (Globe) or 283 (Smart).

From journalism school to golf academy

By Juan F. Sarmiento Jr.

A JOURNALISM school in Manila transferring out into the business of teaching golf is serious.

It's serious not only because of its country-long literature of the pre-eminence of the owners, an eminent son of Presidente Manuel Quezon.

The Manila Times School of Journalism is embedded in upscale golf academy at the former American naval base in Subic, Zambales, now reborn two years ago as the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

The MTSJ was granted a 50-year lease of the property by the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority in June. (See story on page A1.)

Three years ago, Ang acquired The Manila Times, which first, but the owners in 1898 just five months after Gil Cruzcosa, George Downey delivered the Spanish first issue to the people of Manila Bay.

The Englishman, who first published The Manila Times to meet the demand for an American newspaper (usually from American soldiers) who had occupied the Philippines after the massacre, Don Chino Roces, whose family sustained it into the country's biggest newspaper before martial law, could not have imagined that The Manila Times would launch out into teaching golf.

Manila Times College

The MTSJ has applied for upgrade from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to open the golf academy.

"We are now preparing the relevant documents, and already the name of the Manila Times School of Journalism to Manila Times College," Ang said.

The college will have institutes for journalism, sports and languages.

Beginning school year 2005-06, the MTSJ plans to offer other disciplines, both undergraduate and baccalaureate courses, such as Ab History, Ab English, Ab Economics and Ab Sports.

"While retaining CHED's nod, the MTSJ will be offering short-in certificate courses, the latest, starting in January, is a computer for Filipinos course in partnership with Ang Bindabayang Bailey Foundation Inc., a Japanese foundation based in the Philippines," Ang said.

The MTSJ, which opened last year, already has some 500 students in the educational offshoot of The Manila Times in Subic Bay Freeport.

The newspaper, faced with a dwindling readership and increasing costs, is still losing money after three years of operation under Ang, Ang told the business.

Business decision

Asked why the journalism school was diversifying into coaching golf, Ang said it was a "business decision."

"As a business, a journalism school and a sports academy are the upper management function, it's truth, they are not. They are, in fact, complementary," he says.

He said Jill Sports was nothing new to quite a number of universities have been offering the course in Ab Physical Education.

"What we did was to give it a new handle. Why call it simply Physical Education? We decided to give it first, because, clearly we have to be teaching purposes. And so, instead of describing the course simply as AB Physical Education, ours are now calling it AB Sports."

Marketing handle

But he says handing is not enough.

"In the country, golf is a sport with a marketing handle. In detailing the handle, you determine which among the sports [is] the most popular and has the biggest money potential among foreigners, tourists, the hot golfer and business executives."

He said badminton is easily the most popular sport these days. "But who are the enthusiasts? They are just about everybody except the more moneyed class and certainly not the tourists who come to the country to play golf."

So, the golf academy in Subic will target tourists primarily.

Korean tourists

"There is a big market composed of Koreans, tourists who come to the country to play golf," Ang says.

Getting part of that market is logical. Ang notes that Thailand attracts 2 million golfers, of whom 500,000 are South Koreans, who go there to play.

Why Subic? "Well, it has a golf course, Subic Clark, it has almost everything, i.e. scuba, yacht club, polo, etc. also it is just an hour's drive from Clark, where Koreans tourists fly in directly from Seoul. There are 17 flights a week or chartered flights by Cebu Pacific," he said.

More than the facilities, Ang says he MTSJ chose Subic for its reputation to maintain peace and order. "It is an absent 'let it a can-whole community'

108-bed hotel

The MTSJ plans to construct a 108-bed hotel on the leased property to accommodate Korean golf enthusiasts, according to Ang. The school has already tied up with a Korean professional golfer and a Korean resort agency.

"The Koreans have given us a guarantee of 3,000 golfers for 40 rooms and 2,500 golfers for 80 rooms during the months of November, December, January and February," Ang said.

He said the guarantees were conditioned on classifying the hotel as one which is 4.65 per day inclusive of the room charge, three meals a day, green fee, caddy fee and airport transfer-to-port check-in service.

Computer-aided training

The golf academy will offer a two day, one-week and one-month computer-aided training on how to improve one's swing. Ang says the training will start at a golf course in Iriga, Bataan, Manila.

"These special golf programs at short courses are keyed to the interest of our Subic project. They are more useful adults we are still building our student population for 40 hotels, a four-year course," he said.

Ang says that his Korean partner has estimated that he can bring in up to 20 students a year "in four years, that will amount to 80 students who will be branched into Subic locality."

The Subic facility will also offer English proficiency training to Korean students, who will stay at a boarding facility.

"The program is a six-month intensive course. This program will fill the gap since the golfers will be coming only during semestrial," Ang said.

He pointed out that students in South Korea were now required to have English as an early age.

American swing

Ang says software that helps students speak with an American swing is the source of the English proficiency training.

He proudly says that he has acquired the license for the software. "We will be the first Philippine company that is the exclusive distributor of a software on how to speak and swing like an American," Ang told the business.

He said that after three to six months of training "we guarantee any foreigner deserves."

The MTSJ hopes to start offering the English proficiency training this month in Manila to Filipinos and foreigners alike.

But of the market, according to Ang, are the call centers in the country. "We are now in talks with some call work abroad, especially in the United States, and Filipinos who want to go into broadcasting.

Offering golf classes may not be related to the newspaper business, but Ang maintains that it is in sports. Along with an American soccer in a business plan that the first publisher of The Manila Times would recognize—in addition the needs of the American market.

That time, the mother made English-speaking Filipino nurses and call center personnel, preferably those who sound like Americans.

IN THE KNOW

THE SCHOOL: Downey High School was the name of the high school at Fort Bonifacio. The school was demolished in the early 1980s for new dorms where families were stationed there.

It continued its first batch of graduates in 1945 and closed down in 1987 when the U.S. Army Garrison was turned over to the Philippines and the United States.

The school was named after Commodore George Dewey, who was involved with the military against Gen. Aguinaldo's Spanish-American War after just two hours of battle in Manila Bay on May 1, 1898.

Filipino historians would later write that it was a most feeble as Manila had been a corrupt government. Spanish and American forces. But by then, Dewey's victory was hailed as decisive for it brought the United States recognition as a major international.

Dewey became a national hero back in Washington and was honored by the special rank of admiral by the US Congress. Many towns in Manila the naming of streets, Dewey's Dewey, after him. He also enjoyed the fabulous honor of preceding the inauguration by a beautiful. The Bulk of Battle. PDI Research

THE OLD George Dewey High School

Ang confirms offer of position in GMA Cabinet

By Juan F. Sarmiento Jr. and Fe B. Zamora

DAVID Ang said he would have to drew himself of his businesses should he be named head of the Commission on Overseas Filipinos (COF).

"I don't want to be suspected of using my position to advance or promote my business concerns if at all I am appointed," he told the business on Nov. 2.

Ang said government officials should refrain from doing business. "Therefore, once appointed, they should divest their holdings in all their business concerns, without qualification," he said.

He said The Manila Times should be making money by now owing to his alleged political connections.

"The fact that The Manila Times is still losing money after three years of operation should be all suspicion that my position, some action, imagined or otherwise, with the powers that be has benefited my businesses," said Ang, who acquired the newspaper in 2003.

'No business flavor'

"For the record, what I served as the senior presidential consultant on public relations, [did] not ask the President for any business favor," he said.

Ang said he did not pursue his desire to sign on to the COF. That would directly or indirectly benefit his businesses. "More importantly, I have not been appointed to any government post, nor yet anyway."

He confirmed the offer for him to head the COF, but he said, "I have no appointment yet."

"I understand that many people are eyeing me for that position. It will surely be an honor and a privilege to be able to serve the Filipinos," Ang said.

But it seems said the COF would just be a stepping stone for Ang to the post of Foreign Affairs department to seek as the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Labor and Employment that have been identified to the needs of overseas Filipinos.

The COF's secretary-general is Commissioner of Filipinos Overseas (CFO), headed by Jose J. Mendoza Jr., among the DFA's attached agencies. The CFO gives information assistance to Filipinos leaving for foreign countries.

Aside from the two line departments, the COF also is headed by Vicente Ablan Jr., the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council's presidential adviser for overseas Filipino workers and retired Gen. Ben Dimen as special envoy to oversee the Filipinos in the Middle East.

In August, Mr. Arroyo activated the Office of Overseas Filipino (OOF), which has been described as a "super body" which has been attached to the regular line department posts.

The OOF will also have its own "pollination" cadet in the United States," who will be tasked with harnessing the help of some 3 million Filipino immigrants and expatriates in the US.

Aside from former military leader and deputy CIO Commodore Alex Gangcuangco, who has named political attaché to the US, Malacañang named Pen Gonzales of Migrants to head the OOO program (OPW).

Ang, however, said he would only accept the post as chair of the COF "if I could make a difference."

Ex-GMA publicist bags Subic deal

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negotiated with top officials of the SBMA a 50-year lease of the property previously occupied by the Grange Downey High School.

Not purely for profit

Ang, Subic officials said, was given low-loan rates in his project because it was classified as not purely for profit. Ang claims the Manila Times School of Journalism.

"Following our conversation last week, they we formally offer to lease the premises previously occupied by the Grange Downey High School," Ang wrote to Felicito Payumo, then chair of the SBMA, in a letter dated June 23, 2004.

"We intend to use the facility for the expansion of the Manila Times School of Journalism."

Payumo, whose six-year term as SBMA chair ended on Dec. 31, was replaced by Feliciano Lazatano, former president of Asia Land Inc.

"We have lined up other deals—[for] a hotel, golf course, driving range and short-term courses in time for the opening of the 2005 school year," Ang's letter to Payumo read.

Ang proposed the following lease rates per square meter per month:

- April 2004 to April 2007: P10;
- April 2007 to April 2008, P15;
- April 2008 to April 2009, P18.75;
- April 2009 to April 2010, P20;
- April 2010 until the end of the lease contract, P22.

Payumo OK

"Please note that it will take us a little less than a year to secure the necessary clearances, including high-school permits from the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education," Ang's letter to the SBMA said. "We also estimate that it will take us some 18 months to rehabilitate the place."

On July 22, 2004, about a month after Ang wrote the letter to Payumo, the contract was approved. It was shortly before Payumo relinquished his post.

A checklist prepared by the SBMA's Investments Processing Department (IPD) said Ang would earn three rights over 6,000 sq.m. of office space in Buildings 1103, 1102, 1109, 1140, 1145, 1150, 1151, 1152 and 1157 that sit on the 2.5-ha land.

"The buildings are in a bad shape. It might be cheaper to tear down the buildings and put up totally new ones," Ang said in his letter to Antonio.

Pool, driving range

The letter also revealed other plans. "The building at the back may have to be demolished to give way for a swimming pool and a driving range for golf students."

But the duration of the 50-year lease contract, the IPD said, the SBMA has to receive a total of P140 million and 90 workers would get employment. Ang said he was raising $2 million for the hotel project.

"The company will be using the facility for the operation programs of the Manila Times School of Journalism," said an executive summary of the contract prepared by IPD senior officer Irene Bansal.

Fifth of prevailing rates

Critics of the contract described it as a sweetheart deal since the lease rate for the SBMA would receive from Ang's project was just one-fifth of prevailing lease rates inside the freeport, according to Ang, who also proposed a number of American soldiers, who used Subic as a naval base for decades.

IPD head Leonardo Montano and the regular business lease rates were not applied to Ang's project because it was classified as an educational endeavor.

Montano said Ang would lease the 25,000 sq.m. for P15 per sq.m. monthly because the Grange Downey remained the project as "educational institution" and not just merely a "business enterprise."

"We always give special consideration to educational institutions because they are not for profit. They're quasi-[owned] gaining profit," Montano said.

One lease rate for each structure is definitely lower than the rate we give to profit-oriented establishments," he said.

Montano said the recommended and approved rate for Ang's school, which is being questioned, is similar to other colleges operating inside the freeport. "Other schools within SBMA are paying P15 to P20 per sq.m monthly for the lease," he said.

The prevailing lease rates for business establishments in the freeport range from P1 for 1994-97; to P22.50-P30.75 per sq.m monthly, depending on their location, according to Montano.

"It took us almost a month to finally approve the contract," he said. "It only shows that the contract is not, in anyway, a sweetheart deal as others look at it."

COF

Montano said the SBMA also considered the development contribution to supporting the project.

The proposed school will infuse P140 million worth of investments, including the rehabilitation of classroom buildings in the area that it will occupy," he said.

Ang was to be appointed soon as chair of the newly created Commission on Overseas Filipinos (COF), which was recently placed under the Office of the President from the Department of Foreign Affairs. (See story on this page.)

His in-ways said last month that the head of the COF would have a Cabinet rank.

The caller in ing that he head the OOF came last month, or three months after he was granted the 50-year lease of the property in Subic.

Language courses

Should Ang's appointment push through, the expansion of the Manila Times School of Journalism in Subic would complement his job.

Among the courses that the school would offer are languages, "i.e. Japanese, Mandarin, Korean, etc."

"We have recently started to teach Japanese to Filipino nurses, ones with Japanese businesses there in from Japan," said Ang's letter to Payumo.

"The other module qualified Filipino students intending to apply in Japan to take the entrance examinations," it said.

Another course is "health care services." Thousands of Filipinos are currently enrolled in various health care courses and nursing programs in schools nationwide. Others find in land jobs in Europe and the United States.

But Ang told the business that the school had scrapped the plan to train caregivers and nursing assistants at the freeport. "Our studies show there is no market in Subic," he said.

Ang is not new to business ventures. His other enterprise is business interests had pushed former President Joseph Estrada to tap him in 1999 for a move to introduce economic amendments in the Constitution.

Ang was then the of the brother of the so-called "Silent Majority" which, ons, grew the task of propagating information on Estrada's economic amendments and which was rejected due to be partly funded by former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez, a then ally of Estrada who is now in jail in the United States. With reports from Juan F. Sarmiento Jr. and Allan Monitoria, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Angara asked GMA for job, says Lacson

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Senator Lacson

In an interview on ABS-CBN News Channel, Lacson was asked to confirm what he had earlier told broadcaster Ricky Reyes and Rudy Cavasdang. "In your words, is Senator Angara by any implication ng Gabriela that Presidential Adviser?"

"That was what my informant told me," Lacson replied.

The opposition senator added that contrary to Angara's claim that he had met with Mr. Arroyo at her Forbes Park home together with Senate President Franklin Drilon and Speaker Jose de Venecia, Angara actually went with her in a condominium at the fort in Taguig City.

Asked why Angara went to see Mr. President, Lacson said, "I do not know. He has stated 2007 to serve in the Senate. He probably wanted a clearing of understanding or any legislative work to encounter work."

The Senator tried to reach Angara but was informed by an aide that he was out of town.

In the ABC Television, Lacson stressed that there was nothing wrong with Angara meeting with Mr. Arroyo, but the opposition senator should have informed the minority and, preferably, not after the fact.

He said Angara, through Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., had promised to tell them about his meeting when he returned from Germany. This is why Lacson expressed surprise at reading it from Angara.

"Unless personal rang purpose ng meeting [Unless the meeting was for a personal purpose], not for the opposition and not for the country, he has until

Top PNR official resigns, calls for revamp

By Julier Latoy-Jocellanes and Clarissa S. Bautista

IT HIT bad land enough.

Three days after six people died in a rare disastrous homerun, Victor Ziga yesterday resigned as a director of the Philippine National Railways and called for the sweeping reorganization of the railway line's troubled ranks to pave the way for the overhaul of the country's crumbling railway system.

The PNR received a second jolt when its former chief, Jesús Virgilio Aquino, revealed to the Inquirer that the reason the quit last post in June was because she could no longer stand the wrongdoings in the railway line.

Ziga, a retired Philippine Airlines executive who served during President Marcos' time, said the PNR was beset with so many problems which worsened under the current management.

She hinted at alleged rampant anomalies, incessant union clouts, and gross abuse of discretion which supposedly augmented the railway operator's already bleeding finances.

Aquino, who hails from Bicol like Ziga, was appointed to chair the PNR in 2001. A month after assuming the call from an unidentified source, she was named chair of Philippine National Construction Corp.'s (Philcon) project.

Ziga, whom Ms Arroyo appointed to serve during their last month but who resigned in protest after only one year, expressed "grave concern" and exasperation at what he called the "many years of government neglect" of the railways system linking Bicol to Metro Manila.

He urged PNR general manager Jose Mo. Sarmiento II, the top management and all board officials of the firm to resign as well "to pave the way for a top-to-bottom revamp" of the PNR.

"Many of the people were injured when four coaches of a B-set to Manila went flew off the tracks on Friday. Officials suspected the accident may have been caused by monsoon-induced landslides in Quezon province, whose parts of the rail tracks reportedly had been eaten by floods.

Ziga said the PNR should be immediately privatized "and given to a financially and technically qualified professional group."

In his written statement, Ziga said he had submitted his resignation to Ms Arroyo, who appointed him to the PNR board on Sept. 12 and then named him acting chair on Oct. 12. He said he never accepted their chairmanship.

He urged Ms Arroyo to "give more attention to Bicol since she got more votes in the region than her closest rival during the last election" and "not only pay lip service, [instead] capitalize [Bicol Boots]."

Ziga lamented that the Bicol region, if not the whole country, had been "suffering from the many years of government neglect [of] the railway system, despite the fact that it is the cheapest means of transportation for passengers and cargo."

Ziga noted that Sen. Jaker Aquino, also a Bicolano, had decried that while the Bicol line remained idle, the Japan-aided P10-billion railway in central Luzon (by private investors) had the Subic-Clark-Tarlac route in full operation, thus "benefiting the people and the economy."

"At the end of previous lives and property, still the government, now [the responsible to] and concern [for] the many plight of our country's poor railway concern?" Ziga said.

He called the Quezon tragedy "a nightmare... that would haunt the government and hopefully and finally have it to take decisive action."

He urged Ms Arroyo to acquire all her appointees to the PNR to resign and "not [be] part of the problem" [starting with the CON (Commission on Audit) reports, payroll loans and their source."

Ziga said that during the two months he was with the PNR board, he attended one board meeting. He did not say if this was the only meeting the board had during the period.

Sarmiento said the problems with the railway agency were all inherited and that he was only following up his predecessor's unfinished business.

"If that is what the President wants me to do, I don't have problems with that," he said, reacting to Ziga's call for the resignations of the PNR's management.

Aquino, however, said he would not resign unless he received signals from the Palace. "The word is [that] to do it to leave during a time of crisis," he said.

Aquino was appointed by then-Presidential Joseph Estrada in 2000. He said he spent six months of his term under Estrada.

The PNR executive said that when he came in, the rail firm was burdened by labor problems that he helped ease.

Employee overhead accounts for about 75 percent of the PNR's operating costs, he said.

"When I came in, PNR was not able to pay the salaries and give the bonuses. It was during my term that we implemented the Salary Standardization law," he said.

He said the PNR was in a "tough situation."

"Even the plain government agencies are having problems. What more PNR, which has all these unresolved issues that I inherited?"

Sarmiña said the government must really privatize some of the railway lines, like Metro Manila, but that to do that, the company must be rehabilitated first and its balance sheet improved. It needs investments to come in.

He said the Bicol line was inoperative in nature—meaning, it was not an operation to generate income—and might not be able to attract investors.

Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza said the results of the investigations into the PNR accident would be out on Nov. 22.

He said the investigating team would assess and review the PNR's railway system, determine what caused the derailment of the Manila-bound train, and recommend the filing of administrative or criminal charges against those found to be responsible.

He said that angles being looked into include the speed of the train before and at the time it derailed and the alleged looting of railroad and metal pieces.

Mendoza also ordered all PNR train engineers to undergo drug testing, particularly the ones driving the train involved in the accident. The engineers are in the custody of the PNR.

Mendoza said drivers of the Metro Rail Transit and Light Railway Transit were undergoing similar drug testing. He noted that 80 percent of MRT drivers had already been tested.

He said the operators of the PNR from Calamba to Bicol would remain suspended until a thorough inspection was made to ascertain the safety of the system.

The PNR is the state agency overseeing hundreds of kilometers of old railway lines from Metro Manila all the way to Bicol. It has been in the red for decades, but more than P10 billion in debts and loans mean that P1 billion can be spent.

It is widely believed to be operating purely despite earning billions of valuable property.

About 2,000 people ride the train daily from Manila to Bicol, and from Bicol to Manila.

The PNR has more than 2,000 employees.

Shark tales in RP: The good, the bad

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who recently found a wounded whale shark on their shores should have chopped up the creature for its meat and fins.

A magnificent resembles a whale shark minus the spots, both are plankton eaters.

At first, the villagers of Barangay Tarong in Davao Oriental town showed protective concern for the giant animal when they saw it lying on their beach on Nov. 4, "heaving and wallowing from what looked like a spear wound," according to the World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines.

Upon that point, nobody knew it was a rare magnificent, the WWF-P said. "A friend of locals gathered around it, but they kept the right of a creature never before seen. (They) tried pushing the animal back to the water, but the creature would not swim on its own."

The shark, just over five tons, kept lung and weighing about a ton, succumbed to the wound hours later despite the efforts of local "heroes of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. Strike rushed to the area from the BFAR office in neighboring Cagayan.

Revival efforts

But before the animal expired, the entire villagers, who had sheltered it in order to revive it, asked Trella if they could butcher its clear-painful death and take the giant fish home for its meat and fins, WWF-P said.

"Trella was adamant to keep the (still) monstrous fish intact," the group said. "And when it died, he suggested that it be buried."

It was only on the following day that the shark—still in one piece, thanks to the BFAR effort—was properly identified as a megamouth by no official of the Institute Asia Fisheries Development Center (Seafdec).

The Seafdec official was notified about the dead shark by the owner of the 64.2-ha Blue Reach Resort, which was near the spot where the shark got stranded.

A megamouth is how described by having a shubby body and a balloon head. It also got its name for having a broadly rounded mouth that could measure more than a meter wide in an adult.

The one found in Balite was a female measuring 5.04 m long and weighing about a ton. Up to 16 men were needed to carry the carcass when the fishlife took it for safekeeping," the WWF-P said.

24th specimen

The species is so rare that the Sea Academy was problematic. It tagged as "Megamouth Sp. 24," being "only the 24th specimen of its kind recorded in the world," the group said.

"Megamouth No. 24 is only the third megamouth recorded in the Philippines," WWF-P said. "The first and second recorded were caught in the Davao Gulf. The others were sighted at Masbate Bay off Cagayan de Oro in 1998 and 2003."

The megamouth's head is flat but its nose the first and only intact specimen in the Philippines has since "the two earlier specimens found were eaten by fishes folk," it said.

According to the WWF-P, very little is known about megamouth sharks because it is a recent scientific discovery, surfacing only in 1976 in Hawaii.

They are filter feeders mouth like the whale shark—both rational creatures of the sea that feed only on small animals like krill or shrimp. They remain to go in deeper waters (a daylight and more up to shallower parts at night, most probably to feed.

The WWF-P also underscored the megamouth's presence as "a good indication of the health of ocean waters."

"The scientific community believes that the megamouth's presence hints the most spectacular discovery of a new shark in the 2000 century," said Asher Goodman, WWF-P Marine branch and conservation manager.

"In fact, megamouth sharks have no commercial value as opposed to dog sharks which are heavily hunted for its liver oil, or whale sharks which have great economic value. This means there is extremely limited data about them, we don't know how many megamouth casualty affects their population," he added.

TIME's Best of Asia :

Reward up for info on journalist's killing

Turn to page A11

city director, yesterday offered the cash reward for information that could help solve the murder of photojournalist Joel Jose Lumaraog, and said positive news was forthcoming.

"There would be a positive development in two-three days," Abad said.

He said he was optimistic that the enemy which would come from the kinds of the provincial police, would help continue possible witnesses to come forward.

Lumaraog, 36, was gunned down in front of his home on Fri- day after he took shots of the accident at the pier. He had come to talk with Lucelpo G. Arguillas, chief editor of the Davao City-based news agency Mindanews, reporting that he had a story on corruption in local government.

Senior Superintendent Police Office (Supo) commander Chief Supt. Hebert Jaime said he believed that the corruption story the two journalists were working on had something to do with the murder.

The military earlier said the gunmen was probably a member of the Abu Sayyaf breakaway group.

In Malibu, Idaho, police said they had questioned and released member of a gun for-hire gang in connection with the shooting of broadcaster Bernie "Batibot-Bot" Fabon, who was shot by a lone gunman a day after Lumaraog was murdered.

Supt. Oldemelo Magnayon, acting Aklan police director, said the man in witnesses' descriptions of the driver of the motorcycle used by the gunman at Boring after he shot Fabon on station wagon.

Magnayon declined to identify the man, saying he was not yet considered a suspect although he

Witnesses' description

Magnayon said members of the newly formed Task Force Bernie were also hunting down a "police character" who fit the witnesses' description of the gunman.

He said the two men had been involved in several crimes, including killings in the province.

Five witnesses have surfaced and given descriptions of the gunman who shot Fabon outside a canteen in Kalibo, police said.

Investigators believed Fabon's assailants were professional killers hired by criminal group targeted by Kimberly Jane's hiring commissioners.

The group is composed of two other angles and groups or individuals who could be behind his shooting," Magnayon said of the bosses.

Fabon, 28, a the station manager of dyFR Bombo Radyo in Kalibo, Aklan, and hosts a morning program, "Bombombong Big Time."

He underwent an 11-hour operation after sustaining wounds to his intestinal organs.

Wife and son

His doctors said yesterday they were recommending that he be airlifted to a hospital in Iloilo, where facilities were better.

"Bombo Boy is in a tenuous state," said Bombo Radyo station manager Jun Sumerlin. "We are doing everything to see down to group, or to refer him to a tertiary medical facility," said Dr. Edmar Ballesteros.

Sumerlin Sindian and her husband's blood pressure and vital signs were considered to be stable. They have he could be brought to Iloilo by land.

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Endangered species

Senate Minority Leader Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said journalists in the country were becoming an "endangered species" and urged the government to crack down on loose firearms.

"The issue firearms brought out of the license, the issue and terms of this kind," Pimentel said.

Sen. Manuel Villar blamed the latest attack on media practitioners on the failure of the PNP to eliminate the culture of violence in the country.

Villar, chair of the Senate committee on public order and dangerous drugs, said the statistics were alarming and yet the PNP seemed helpless in stopping the killing of media men. With reports from Berto L. Vidal and Nestor J. Burgos Jr., PDI reporters Norman Carla P. Gomez and Felipa Gelacio, PDI Visayas Bureau Chief Jose O. Arnaldo and Mikhael Lim Uba in Manila

SOURCE: TIME.COM

METRO

A day full of sharing, togetherness

By Ruth L. Navarro

FOR THE Muslim community at the Greenhills Shopping Center (GSC) in San Juan, it meant a day of celebration and sharing.

Eid al-Fitr is the feast held at the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. Yesterday was its observed a traditional holiday in observance of the end of the month.

On Saturday morning, GSC's Muslim entrepreneurs and their families cleared a floor in the narrow alley between Unimart and Pizza Hut.

Danny Saranggang, former chair of the Greenhills prayer center, said the location (for celebration) was not inspired by the stores that arose last month where center residents evicted their opposition to the idea of building a prayer room.

Saranggang added that the Eid al-Fitr was the Muslims' way of sharing goodness together.

Food brought by different families and associations were shared with each other.

The chanting aspect was evident all throughout Ramadan because the poor families, in plastic drums filled with bread, mineral water or fruit were distributed for free to men, women and children.

Light foods were eaten after the sunset prayer before the fast.

There was also a show of discipline because most of the drama were just right outside the makeshift prayer room, but nobody tried to get closer than what was allotted to them.

Rainier Ibrina, a jewelry designer, said the occasion was also a way for the rich to share their blessings with the poor, adding still others have remembered the plan number of the suspects' vehicle to come forward and help in the ongoing investigation of the incident.

Lledo, 39, sustained a gunshot wound in the forehead and died while undergoing treatment in the Quezon City General Hospital.

The victim was with his friends at a shop inside the Shell gasoline station at the corner of Congressional and Mindanao Avenues

Edsa bus route scheme on hold

By Margie C. Oria

HEARS in the building of end terminals and evaluation from some bus operators led the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to postpone the implementation of the Organized Bus Route (OBR) scheme on Edsa that was supposed to have started yesterday.

The scheme was envisioned to prevent passenger buses from plying Edsa at the same time.

But MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said they would rep ther bus to start the full implementation of the OBR scheme before the Christmas rush.

"We are still finishing the end-point terminals in Alabang and Fairview," Fernando said in protests. "The government does not fully own the bus stations, as we also have to consider the interest of the owners."

Metrobank Mall across the Alabang terminal while Robinson's Mall houses the Fairview station.

Fernando added that while some operators were ready to implement the scheme, "there is still a lot of educating to do." Continuous dialogue with bus operators are being held to ensure that the scheme is well understood, he said.

The MMDA introduced the OBR scheme late last year to limit the number of passenger buses on Edsa. Buses would be kept to end-point terminals and then sent out depending on the number of passengers along Edsa at a given time.

Buses skipping designated loading bays, buses running without dispatch numbers, or drivers who fail to surrender license cards at designated mid-areas would be fined P1,000 for the first offense and P5,000 and one-month suspension of license for the second offense.

WAITING FOR CHRISTMAS

A boy finds warmth and comfort in the arms of his sister and the company of their pet dog along Vito Cruz, Manila, where they beg for alms. The number of children begging in the streets grows each day especially with the approach of the Christmas season.

Not yet off the hook

WILLIE Revillame jailer cleared Multinational Village Homeowners Association president Israel Guevara of suspicions that he had kept in his custody evidence confiscated during an illegal drugs raid, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency is not leaving him off the hook.

PDEA Judge Supt. Orlando Mallorca has asked Guevara to explain why the evidence gathered during a raid by the PDEA and police on Dec. 13, 2003, at Lot 35, Blk. 7, Cairo St., Multinational Village, were in his possession.

Mallorca said the PDEA's Metro Manila Regional Office is currently conducting an inquiry on the evidence seized by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation last Friday.

Police Supt. Wilfredo Calderon, in an affidavit, said Guevara did not own the confiscated evidence. Calderon said Guevara turned over the items to NBI-SI operations manager Alfred Antonio on April 26, 2004, for safekeeping. Sunny C. Carvajal

Only plants, not trees cut for road project—QC

By Tina G. Santos

NO TREES were sacrificed for the ongoing P31-million road-widening project of the Quezon City government in Batasan Avenue.

Mayor Feliciano Belmonte assured this yesterday after residents claimed that the various shade and fruit trees in the area had been cut to give way to the project.

"That's absurd! What trees are they talking about?" Belmonte said, adding that the homeowners were merely using the issue as an excuse to oppose the project. He said the residents did not even mention anything about any tree when he talked to them about the road construction last month. Belmonte claimed the homeowners were against the project because they had been using the spaces as their ta de batalan or to park their vehicles.

Only "small and decaying plants" were removed, the mayor added.

Slain lensman's family appeals for help

By Tina Santos

THE FAMILY of businessman and photojournalist Michael Lledo who was shot dead by unidentified assailants Saturday morning in Quezon City is appealing to witnesses who may have remembered the plate number of the suspects' vehicle to come forward and help in the ongoing investigation of the incident.

Lledo, 39, sustained a gunshot wound in the forehead and died while undergoing treatment in the Quezon City General Hospital.

The victim was with his friends at a shop inside the Shell gasoline station at the corner of Congressional and Mindanao Avenues around 2 a.m. when the incident happened, according to PO3 Joseph Madrid.

Witnesses told police that the suspects aboard a Mitsubishi Pajero opened fire at the motorists in the gas station. The gunmen fired four shots, one of which hit Lledo, said the witnesses who claimed that they were unable to get the Pajero's plate number.

They added that they only saw the gunman's hand holding a gun and that the Pajero immediately sped off.

The National Union of Journalists yesterday tried to confirm if Lledo was a staffer of Sunstar Manila, but failed to do so because the Iloilo office were closed for the holiday.

Muslims and Christians should respect each other

YESTERDAY, Monday, was the end of the fasting month of Ramadan.

We're probably the only non-Muslim country in the world that has made Eid al-Fitr a holiday. Obviously, the wisest administration, which is also misguided, wanted to please our Muslim brothers and sisters.

But hearing the Muslims by declaring their feast a holiday in the entire country all we did the rest of the South. It will not end the Christian-Muslim bloodshed. It will not end the hatred. Muslims hate the Christians and vice versa. What will end the conflict in the South and the hatred between Christians and Muslims is respect for each other's beliefs and cultures.

* * *

Respecting the beliefs and culture of another does not mean our group imposing its way of life and thinking on the other.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a rebel group that operates mostly in the Cotabato and Lanao areas, wants to establish a Islamic state in the South. But would make Christians the minority. But why would a minority group want to lord it over the predominantly Christian population?

* * *

At the risk of being called "anti-Muslim," I'm saying this because respect is a two-way street. If Christians reach out to the Muslims, the Muslims should do the same. In short, respect should be mutual.

* * *

In my Nov. 9 column, Makati Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado was featured for gambling at the shortlived Bored casino. Citing sources Salvador's, this column said that the vice mayor lost P13 million last month.

Mercado called to say the P13-million figure was grossly exaggerated. He admitted that he went to the casino to play but the amount was

ON TARGET

ALEXIS TAD-AWAN

"much, much less than you think." He refused to say how much he lost. He also said that he didn't owe any financier any loan. Mercado said he pays his loans the day after he gets them from the financier. The vice mayor said, in jest, that gambling was his only vice. "I don't drink and I'm not a womanizer," he said, laughing.

* * *

Last Nov. 12, my item about Commodore Tirso Danga was too apparently due to lack of space. Here's the rest of the story: I've known Danga for only a year but I've come to admire him very much. He's self-effacing, a workaholic and a disciplinarian. If there's anybody who should be lucky chief, it's Danga. Former National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force chief Angelito Reyes was successful in exposing kidnappers because he made use of Danga's leads. Let's pray Danga's illness is nothing serious. He's one of a kind in the military.

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TUESDAY
NOVEMBER 16, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

A 36

SPORTS

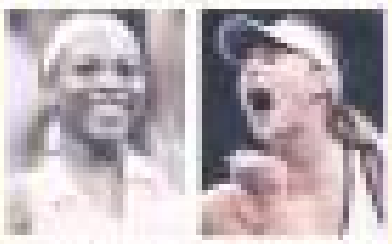
Editor Rodolfo S. Matienzo

Don't miss your favorite TV shows!
Check out today's
Inquirer TV Guide
in the
Entertainment section

What's Inside

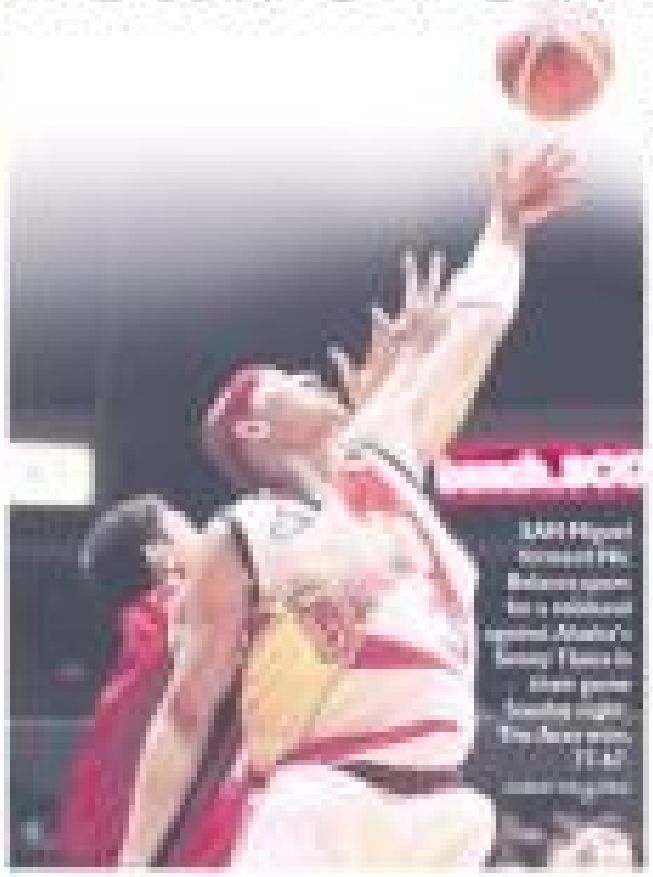
Easy does it for Arevalo; Arcilla struggles A27

Dooling, O'Neal rekindle Heat A28



Williams, Storeguvs forge title showdown A28

Top meets bottom as PBA road show hits Cavite City



Jam Miguel forward Mo Bolomboy spins for a wideout against Alaska's Sonny Thoss in their game Sunday night. The Aces won 77-67. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

THE BEST and the worst teams on the road clash today in a Gran Matanchin PBA Philippine Cup game at the San Sebastian gym in Cavite City.

Sta. Lucia Realty was a no-game calculator dropping its first six games before Ramon Ramirez Gardeo rule-crushing offense came around at 6 p.m.

The Realtors dropped their two out-of-town assignments against San Miguel Beer in Dau, Pampanga City and the Red Bulls in Bacolod.

Sometime, the Cha Kings flexed some of the muscle with two road victories, including a 40-39 squeaker over the Coca-Cola Tigers in Cebu and Santos City but lacked their warrior streak.

Sta. Lucia coach Alfredo Chua, already concerned with the Cha Kings' perennial exploits, also faces the burden of reminding Gardeo's huge, versatile cavities and explosive scoring.

"They are big and fast. We might have some serious problems in the backcourt and it would all depend on how my players react to it," said Chua, whose Realtors bring up the rear of the pack.

With Kenneth Duremdes on the injured list, rookies Wilbert Omolon, Rudy Hondrada and Carl Francisco will be tasked to handle Gardeo's dynamic backcourt tandem of Mark Caguioa and Jayjay Helterbrand in the game slowly backed by Cavitenos, the official host city division of the PBA Road Show.

Jaycee Realtors Lito Lim triumph over Pedilla, Mendoza turned star three pointers and finished with 28 points on top of 10 assists, two rebounds and a steal and so appear the PBA Press Corps Player of the Week honors.

Chua didn't fold Medina Aguilar and Dennis Espino for extended minutes together, showing that he would use the same plays against the Cha Kings.

"We're ready for it and we scrimmaged offense on on Tim Floor. I eliminated them at the end and it worked for us," said Chua.

It will be a big gamble though not to put the Realtors Aguilar-Espino on the floor at the same time against the Cha Kings, who boast of Eric Menk, Rowel Hidalgo and Andy Seigle. Jane Navarro

STANDINGS	W	L
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Purefoods	5	3
San Miguel	5	3
Coca-Cola	4	3
Sunkist	4	3
Alaska	4	4
Red Bull	2	6
Sta. Lucia	1	6

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6 p.m.—Realtors vs. Cha Kings

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La Salle-Ateneo feud shifts to badminton court

LA SALLE and Ateneo extended their rivalry to the badminton courts, pulling off contrasting victories yesterday to assume a showdown for the ladies' crown in the JVC Open Badminton Invitationals at Centennial Hall of the Philippine Sports Commission Complex.

The Lady Archers cut the favored Far Eastern U shuttlers down to size via a 3-0 count on victories by Michelle Guerrero and Paula Obispo in the singles and Theresa Chua and Paula Chua in the doubles.

But to be outdone, Ateneo scotched Junior Yuson with reverse sweepjumper Otto Gonzalez in the second singles to complete a 2-1 victory in the other semifinal of the event sponsored by guitar electronics firm JVC.

La Salle and Ateneo, famous for their legendary basketball rivalry in the UAAP, dispute the title and the top prize of P65,000 starting at 1:30 noon today.

The final berths in the men's side are still being disputed. The semifinal pairings pit FEU against Trinity and UST against EPT Mikhael.

Guerrero and Obispo blanked Julie Ann Hilador and Jennilyn Cabanero, winning 11-9, 11-9 and 11-1, 11-3, respectively.

FEU, which swept the men's and ladies' titles in the women JVC Open, tried to stay alive in the doubles but Mary Ann Clemente and Criselda Bandola failed to sustain their 13, 11 first-set victory and succumbed to the power and mastermanship of the Chuas, who took the last two sets, 11-7, 11-1.

Ateneo's Ma. Aurora Co dropped off Lea Feias, 11-8, 11-5, in the first singles match but UST's tandem of Rose Ann dela Cruz and Rachelene Amores ripped the Archers Go Alcalde-Ilo pairing to force a decider to the other singles match.

Chia proved up to the task, however, and overwhelmed Lyka Gomez, 11-5, 11-2, to fill the Kalipunan-based shuttlers in the championship round against the La Ri Archers.

Meanwhile, Mirian College bested four other schools in the cheering competition that spiced up the week-long tournament. The championship was worth P20,000 for Mirian's high school squad.

Mirian showed its superiority and class in appearance, showmanship, synchronization, choreography, difficulty of stunts and pyramid.

St. Scholastica's College placed second worth P15,000 while Immaculate Conception Academy-Cavite won P10,000 for third.

Knights wary of hot Eagles

RECORDS don't necessarily reflect the true strength of some teams.

And coach Louie Alas has this in mind when the Sunkist Orange Knights duel with collar-dwelling Adidas Mobile Aviators in the PBL-Open Championship today at the Lemery gym.

"They have good players, and if they play well, Adidas Mobile will be hard to beat," said Alas.

The two teams collide at 4 p.m. with both aiming to win consecutive games for the first time in the tournament, even as Air Philippines and Pelicari Mesh try to recover from recent losses in the 2 p.m. first game.

Alas pointed out that the Eagles have started playing to their potential, stunning their 55-53 upset of defending champion Magnolia-Hill last Thursday.

New recruits Eddy Superas and Rowenn Orcia, who scored 13 points apiece, keyed the Eagles' victory which came after four straight losses.

"After scoring their first win, I know their morale is high, so we have to play as a team to win," said Alas.

Eagles coach Sonny Barzaga pledges a solid defense in the key for Adidas Mobile-Aviators.

The match-up between the two teams with collegiate cores will also pit top players of Philippine Christian University against a Letran squad a dream of a repeat in this year's NCAA.

PCU led by Superas, Robert Sison and Jason Castro, who are all now with Adidas Mobile, frustrated Letran's title defense in the Final four before eventually winning it all.

Jasmine M. Payo

CAUGHT Espinas (right), who brought down Letran in the NCAA, will face the Knights anew in the PBL.

Paragua, Barbosa up against crack field

FILIPINOS Mark Paragua and Oliver Barbosa battle the world's best 16-and-under players in the 42nd World Junior Chess championships set to start this Saturday in Goa, India.

Paragua, who came back Friday from Spain, and Barbosa will compete in a field boasting of GMs and Super GMs, including Hungarian Peter Heike, the 2002 World Under-18 champion.

"I will do my best once this is my last appearance as a junior," said the 20-year-old Paragua, whose best finish in an age group event is a tie for second in the 2000 World Under-14 in Spain.

PARAGUA

The event, which has in its draw seven GMs, two other Super GMs and a dozen other International Masters, will be a 13-round event.

Host India has entered 32 entries, including Super GM Pentala Harikrishna.

The other favorites include Russian Super GM Evgeniy Alexeev (ELO 2604), GM Timur Gareyev (ELO 2620) of Uzbekistan, GM Jan Smeets (ELO 2565) of the Netherlands, GM Yuriy Dvorkovich (ELO 2535) of Ukraine.

Newly-crowned 2004 Girls U-18 titlist Iweta Rajlich (ELO 2026) of Poland and semifinal Zhao Jun of China (ELO 2021) are also to be fielded.

Quezon Huskers oust Probiotics, gain semis

LUCENA, QUEZON — The Quezon Cove Huskers outlasted Lucena-to-Cebu Province, 76-75, Sunday and captured the last semifinal seat of the United Regional Basketball League (URBL) at the Quezon Convention Center.

Rookie Mike Silangcan, a deserving guard from the Philippine Maritime Institute, spiraled six of his 12 points in the final five minutes as he combined with PMI teammate Larry Rodriguez to wrap up the Huskers' elimination campaign with a 5-0 record.

With the win, the Gen Wille Energy franchise joined M. Distillery-Cebu City, the Team Sur Snipers and Kadosa Cove, as Batangas is the double-round semifinalists of this tournament sponsored by Lucenahub and adidas.

Lucenahub-Cebu Province finished last with a 0-5 card.

The game was marked by nine deadlocks, with the Probiotics leading for the last time at 66-65 on Ironchev Amacio's tandem, with 6:16 remaining.

Gilbert Tenorio had up in Quezon took the lead and Rodriguez followed it up with a basket and cockpit for a 68-66 edge.

"I'm glad Marquez showed his true character today. He will be a big help in our semifinal campaign," said Huskers coach Francis Rodriguez of the PMI ace.

The Huskers will face elimination topnotcher M. Distillery-Cebu City at the start of the semifinals tomorrow at 5 p.m.

THE SCORE:

QUEZON 76—Gilbert 16, Miranda 12, L. Rodriguez 10, A. Rodriguez 10, Tenorio 7, Bonifacio 6, Rivera 5, Ramirez 5, Abrantes 2, Tapawan 2, Salvador 2, Sangalang 2, Bravante 2, Lagunzad 2, Agustin 2, Apostol 2

LUCENA-CEBU 75—Ilano 17, Amacio 15, Bolaños 12, Ilo 10, Alcantara 7, Gonzalez 6, Pastor 5, Dalangin 4, Pinili 3, Sangalang 2, Bravante 2, Lagunzad 2, Agustin 2, Apostol 2

QUARTER SCORES: 21-19, 43-41, 68-68, 76-75

Bakbakan derby semis kicks off today

THE MUCH-AWAITED championship round of the 2004 Bakbakan National E-Ring Derby kicks off at the Araneta Coliseum starting at 5 p.m. today with 71 runners vying for fistfuls in the finals.

Competing in the derby presented by the Amateur Federation of Gamefowl Breeders and Thunderbird Farms is the first quarter of the 205-qualifiers from the 16 separate regional and provincial eliminations rounds. The matches were drawn a record 612 rounds... a big leap from last year's 205 participants.

The qualifying rounds began on Oct. 9 in Cebu and ended on Nov. 30 in Bulacan Mega Cockpit.

The 205 survivors include 69 three-pointers, 20 with 2.5 points apiece and 199 with 2 totals.

The enormous increase in the number of qualifiers has prompted organizers to extend the 2-day semifinals to four days to four days.

Tonight, the derby will hold its three-other semifinal encounters on Thursday, Saturday and Sunday.

After this round, all entries with scores of 5 and 4.5 points clash for runner-up honors on Nov. 23, while all those with 5 points lock horns on Nov. 25 for the Bakbakan 2004 championship. The victor will also clinch the Bakbakan Perpetual Cup for his association.

SPORTSWATCH

Lambao is UCI road chief

JUN LAMBAO, assistant sports editor of Today, has been confirmed the title of Continental Commissioner for Asia (Road cycling) by the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), the world governing body for cycling. Lambao takes over of 20-year-stalwarts from 78-year-old Hong Kong cyclosports aide extended the International commissioners' term extended for the UCI from the 2005 to 2008 of the World Cycling Center in Aigle, Switzerland. Two other Filipinos are active UCI international commissioners — Adolfo "Ding" Cruz for road and Oscar "Boying" Rodriguez of for mountain bike. The Filipinos in the country came from England Germany, the United States, Brazil, Australia, Poland, Denmark, Portugal, Italy, Serbia and Montenegro, Belarus, Israel, Singapore, Malaysia, Malaysia, Japan, Hungary, Kazakhstan and Ben Philippines.

Buencis makes his mark

BARRY Buencis of FEU-Tamaraw Rising snapped both of this afternoon's PBA rookie-of-the-day honors to take the Letterwinner T-Bird category in the 2004 Shell Advance Super Rookie Championships at the Araneta Basin grounds on Quezon Boulevard in Manila. The 7-2 pure-shot shooter and 6th Mindanao's Big Boy outshined Mariquelen, John Ray Evasio, John Lery Espinas and Jake Lozano to capture top honors in the event. Buencis, one of two sons of well-known businessman Joseph Buencis, "Boying" Buencis, also finished second in the Most Valuable Player category behind Mike Arroyo. Last month, Buencis wound up the Individual Crowns and other brother Mac to Buencis. Buencis's performance lured some of the leader from the victories of Jun Mitchell John Lee, Jose Rodriguez and Jimmy Bernal in their respective categories.

Pacquiao vying in PBA/MMA

BOXING champion Manny Pacquiao's other fighting skill will be tested by his countrymen in join the Pocket Billiards Association of Makati's billiards tournament beginning Dec. 3.

Pacquiao, who sells Royal Sports and Pasay City Councilor Mark Antonio has signed to sponsor PBA/MMA All-Americans by Hernandez — the Hernandez" tournament is one on banking more than a million dollars in prize money and grabbing the champion's trophy to the floor it is claimed. The club championships will be held in two weeks with Dec. 11 at the Coronado Billiards parlor in Greenhill, Makati City. Medal play will be double-elimination rotation, with more than 4 hundred players getting their consolations in the tournament. Cuper: E. E. Aurelli.

CCIP fund-raiser golf set

THE CHAMBER of Commerce Industry of the Philippines (CCIP) will host the 2nd CCIP Open Golf Tournament, a fund-raising tournament on Nov. 18 at the Philippine Navy Golf Club in Taguig. Highlights of the event presented this year by Lumiwan Corp., Splash Corp. and Indosuez Philippines include a trip for two to Phuket, Thailand, to the hole-in-one winner. The tournament, sponsored by Allstate General Sales Agent, will be staffed with participants in case no one shoots an ace. There are also two holes and special awards for the runners. Registration starts at 8 a.m. and tee off time 7 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. for foursomes. All the CCIP members on (632) 8894604 or 8917720.

Divisoria in Cup at Valley

THE DIVISORIA Cup tees off Monday at the Valley Golf and Country Club's Executive course. The event, organized to help poor school children, unites together for seniors in Division A, B and C and the Ladies' division. Registration starts at 10 a.m. Tee-off will be shotgun start at 10 a.m. 12 p.m. with the awarding ceremony and the raffle of 10 major prizes to begin at 6:30 p.m. The event was first played in 2000 through the efforts of Rotary Club District 3780 as a means of raising funds for less fortunate children. "The money we will raise will go a long way in helping our beneficiaries," said tournament director Glen Villanueva.

Dooling, O'Neal rekindle Heat

SHAQUILLE O'Neal underlines his aggressiveness at the post with an emphatic dunk over Milwaukee's guard Michael Redd (22). REUTERS

MIAMI—Keyon Dooling forced a second overtime with a running layup, and the Miami Heat took advantage by scoring the first seven points of the extra session to beat the Milwaukee Bucks, 112-110, on Saturday.

Shaquille O'Neal had his third straight double-double, finishing with 19 points and 19 rebounds for Miami, which stopped a two-game losing streak in dramatic fashion.

Keith Van Horn scored eight points in the first overtime, including 3 pointers on consecutive trips. Fifteen Michael Redd hit a jumper from the top of the key with 10.7 seconds left, the Bucks were up four and seemingly poised to win their fourth straight.

But after Eddie Jones scored to cut the lead to 108-106, Van Horn gave the Heat their biggest break, dropping a pass and knocking the ball out of bounds with 3.7 seconds left. Dooling took the inbounds pass, eased the length of the floor and dropped in a layup with 1.4 seconds left to tie it.

Van Horn—who had all seven with 16 points—had a chance to atone for his mistake, but his straightaway 3 pointer with one second left to the game came up short.

Redd had 32, and Maurice Williams added 18 points and 10 assists for Milwaukee.

Eddie Jones had 19 points for Miami, which also got 17 from Hassan Adams and 14 apiece from Antoine Walker and Damon Jones.

In Washington, Dirk Nowitzki had 32 points, 13 rebounds and five assists to lead the Dallas Mavericks over the Washington Wizards, 122-113.

Dwayne Wilard Jerry Stackhouse added 20 points, including three 3-pointers during a 33-6 run in the fourth quarter that helped Dallas break open in four games.

PEJA Stojakovic fires from the hip.

four Washington players scored at least 20 points. Former Mavericks Antawn Jamison and Larry Hughes each had 23 points and Gilbert Arenas and Brendan Haywood added 20 apiece.

Nowitzki also had nine assists as Washington became the first team to score at least 100 points this season against Dallas, a team not generally known for its defensive prowess.

Jason Terry (the Mavericks' other sixth man, had 13 points and 11 assists. The Mavericks' seven seasoned Washington's quartet of 20-point scorers by outscoring the Wizards' 56-33.

At Philadelphia, Allen Iverson had 29 points and 12 assists, and Shaw Jackson added 17 points to lead the 76ers over the Orlando Magic, 96-87.

The 76ers have won the first three games on a season-long five-game homestand, though this was the first one they swapped top-in regulation.

After scoring a game against New Jersey into overtime on a basket in the final seconds, then winning a game against Indiana with a shot at the buzzer, Iverson finished this one off early.

He had five assists in the third quarter, including two straight—on baskets by Jackson and Andre Iguodala—that mapped a 66-game and led a decisive 17-9 run.

Grant Hill led the Magic with 18 points. Pat Garrity added 14 and No. 1 draft pick Dwight Howard had 14 rebounds. Steve Francis, who came in averaging 20.8 points on 42 percent shooting, scored 14 points.

At Seattle, Ray Allen scored a season-high 39 points and the Bucks overcame a 23-point deficit in less to the third quarter to beat Memphis, 120-113.

The Bucks won their sixth consecutive game after an opening-eight loss. Memphis, a 50-victory playoff team last season, fell to 2-6.

The Grizzlies came back to take after trailing 96-73 with 9:56 left in the third period.

After scored 11 points in the final quarter, when Seattle erased a 108-84 deficit. Antonio Daniels had 28 points for the Sonics, and Jerome Ind 22 in the fourth.

Otis Easley topped the Grizzlies with 25.

In Sacramento, Caldi Peterson, Mike Miller scored 26 points and grabbed nine rebounds, helping Sacramento beat Denver, 103-89.

Miller made 7 of 8 shots from the field—including both 3-point attempts—and 10 of 11 free throws. Sacramento has won two straight following a 1-4 start.

Carmelo Anthony had 20 points and six rebounds for Denver.

Peja Stojakovic had 26 points, Mike Bibby scored 20, and Chris Webber added 18 for the Kings.

Sacramento improved to 4-0 on home despite getting only 10 points and nine rebounds from Chris Webber, who was in foul trouble. AP

NBA on 'Solar'

Yao Ming and the Houston Rockets take on the New Jersey Nets live at 6:00 a.m. today on Solar Sports, with a replay at 6 p.m.

Donofrio rules LPGA champions tourney

MOBILE, Alabama—Heather Daly-Donofrio holed out her second shot for eagle on the 72nd hole and retained as a four-stroke victory in the LPGA Tournament of Champions on Sunday.

Daly-Donofrio closed with a 2-under par 71. A bogey on the final hole gave her a 72-hole total of 19 under 269, counting her to tour tying the tournament record of 20 under set by Se-Ri Pak in 2002.

The 35-year-old Daly-Donofrio started the day with a three-stroke lead over Sophie Gustafson and no one was able to put a dent in that margin all day. She was assisted to five strokes when Daly-Donofrio holed out a 9-iron approach from 125 yards.

"I had a perfect yardage and it was the best swing I've ever made," Daly-Donofrio said. "I was still bad that swing. It hit about 8 feet in front of the pin, then everybody started cheering, so I knew it went in.

"That made me relax a little. That was the good start I needed."

The victory was surprising because Daly-Donofrio's opening seventeen on the Magnolia Grove Course the previous three years was 75-6. But she opened with 66-66, then posted a tournament-best 67.

The only reason she was even in the field is because tournament officials extended the eligibility criteria to winners from 2000. Although her tee to get in on her own merit was in the 2003 Fire Union Bray Ring Classic.

"The second win is very much sweeter than the first one because if you win just one, you don't know if it's a fluke or not," said Daly-Donofrio.

The other big winner of the day was Lizette Diaz, who birdied the last two holes to shoot 69 and finish second. Her 264, 149 strike bumped her from No. 36 on the money list to No. 27, allowing her to qualify for this season's season-ending ADT Tour Championship in Delray Beach, Florida.

"I think there was a lot of a surprise, the second place, but I had a few things go my way on the last two holes, so it's nice to finish with two birdies," Diaz said. "Unfortunately, I still did not win the golf tournament, but a pretty solid week." AP

DALY-DONOFRIO

Williams, Sharapova forge title showdown

WILLIAMS: Chance to earn her season

LOS ANGELES—Serena Williams earned a step closer to salvaging her season with a 6-0, 7-6 (3), 6-3 semifinal victory over Alicia Bhatnagar in the WTA Championships on Saturday.

"We just went for it," Bhatnagar said. "I would give all the credit to her. I was playing some good tennis and she really raised her levels for."

Williams, ranked eighth and unseeded at a Grand Slam title this season for the first time since 2001, advanced to Monday's final against Maria Sharapova, the 17-year-old Russian who stunned her mother Elizabeth Arden final.

Sharapova defeated seventy-seeded Anastasia Myskina, 2-6, 6-2, 6-2, for the first time after losing all three of their other meetings this year.

"If Serena would play like she did today, I don't think she (Sharapova) would have any chance," Myskina said.

Sharapova replied, "We just so excited to be in the final. I could not have asked for more."

Sharapova was rewarded a code violation for being coached in the fifth game of the third set by her father Yuri.

"He always coaches me," Myskina said, adding that most players coaches do the same thing during matches.

Sharapova said, "I didn't hear what he said."

Williams obviously blasted powerful groundstrokes, served in the 120-mph (193-kph) range and rushed to the net, where she won 28 of 39 points against Bhatnagar.

"I'm doing it the match what I do in practice, so let me that's really important," she said.

Dressed in a pink-and-white tank shirt and pink shoes, Williams appeared and showed no as to GOLF fans or Staples Center who were already on her side.

Bhatnagar, has guaranteed Lindsay Davenport will retain the top spot when the year-end WTA rankings are released on Sunday.

"Six more hours for Lindsay," said Williams, who was sidelined for eight months after knee surgery. "She's had a few tough years and to come back as number one kind of motivates me because I know she had a big knee injury as well." AP

SHARAPOVA: Excited to be in final

Healthy Federer hopes to end season with a bang

HOUSTON—World No. 1 Roger Federer pronounced himself fit, rested and ready to end his season in style with a successful defense of the Masters Cup title.

The winner of three Grand Slam titles and the first man to go a perfect 16-0 in tie-breaks in a calendar year, five players in the history of tennis have enjoyed similar campaigns than the silky-smooth Swiss.

With 10 titles this season, Federer does not require another victory at the eight-player season finale to confirm his status as the most feared player of his generation.

But an 11th win, or a hint a strong showing at the Pleyhuis Tennis Club would offer reassurance that the 23-year-old is fully over a nagging thigh strain and ready to carry his momentum into a new season.

Federer returns to action for the first time since injuring his left thigh while preparing for his home tournament in Basel almost a month ago.

Forced to withdraw from the Paris Masters, he was replaced in the draw by Andy Roddick, who went on to win the title.

Federer missed two weeks of practice and was unable to play for a week after returning to training in Monaco and ruled himself fit and ready to return to the court.

"The feeling good," said Federer, who will open second-seeded play on Monday against French Open champion Gaston Gaudio.

"I've been practising since Monday here and I've been practising since Monday here [illegible]."

After scoring a game against New Jersey into overtime on a basket in the final seconds, then winning a game against Indiana with a shot at the buzzer, Iverson finished this one off early.

He had five assists in the third quarter, including two straight—on baskets by Jackson and Andre Iguodala—that mapped a 66-game and led a decisive 17-9 run.

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Otis Easley topped the Grizzlies with 25.

In Sacramento, Caldi Peterson, Mike Miller scored 26 points and grabbed nine rebounds, helping Sacramento beat Denver, 103-89.

Miller made 7 of 8 shots from the field—including both 3-point attempts—and 10 of 11 free throws. Sacramento has won two straight following a 1-4 start.

Carmelo Anthony had 20 points and six rebounds for Denver.

Peja Stojakovic had 26 points, Mike Bibby scored 20, and Chris Webber added 18 for the Kings.

Sacramento improved to 4-0 on home despite getting only 10 points and nine rebounds from Chris Webber, who was in foul trouble. AP

Real Madrid scores big win

MADRID, Spain—Brazilian forwards Ruy Schmidt and Ricardo Oliveira scored a goal each Sunday to help Real Betis top previously unbeaten FC Barcelona, 2-1, in the 13th round of the Spanish league.

Barcelona (10-2-1) missed a chance to establish a club record for its best start to a season. Frank Rijkaard's team needed a win to improve on the record by Bobby Robson's Barcelona side of 1996-97.

Earlier Sunday, Real Madrid trounced lowly Albacete, 6-1, as the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium to move to within four points of first-place Barcelona at the top of the standings.

Ronaldo scored twice with Zinedine Zidane, Raul Gonzalez, Ruben Samuel and substitute Michael Owen also netting to extend Madrid's unbeaten run to five.

The victory lowered Madrid's seaside before its visit to Deportivo next Saturday, and David Beckham added to Madrid's satisfaction by netting his first appearance after a month's absence with broken ribs.

In London, Wayne Rooney and Ruud van Nistelrooy rekindled Manchester United's championship hopes with a 3-1 victory at Newcastle on Saturday.

Rooney netted twice and Van Nistelrooy—fresh from suspension—scored from a deliberately inserted penalty as the Reds moved up to seventh, although they are still 11 points behind leader Chelsea.

Rooney fired the Reds ahead after seven minutes in St. James' Park.

REAL Madrid stars Ronaldo (left) and David Beckham share a light moment on the pitch after the crushing victory.

PCA OPEN

Easy does it for Arevalo; Arcilla struggles

By Marc Anthony Reyes

DIGGING her heels deep into the clay court, Filipino No. 1 Czarina Mae Arevalo could only watch helplessly as her opponent, Australian Lucy Tu, pounded a second-set ace to end the match, 6-2, 6-1, yesterday, at the Philippine Columbian Association tennis courts.

The 18-year-old Arevalo, last year's champion but seeded second-only behind a world-ranked South American, didn't show the run in her game usually displayed during her matches.

Arevalo still bore her hands full against top-seed Lovlin Ann Asa who scored an impressive 6-2, 6-1 victory over Michelle Pang.

Let's compare her, Lim Soo Ing, was even more dominating in a 6-0, 6-0 rout of Kazakhstan Ekaterina Ivanenko.

In men's singles, defending champion Chang Hyo-cook of South Korea continued his fine form with a 6-0, 6-1 thrashing of Raymond Villanueva even as top RP player Johnny Arcilla struggled to oust Wilso Sabinsky, 7-5, 6-3.

The defending men's women's third seed Ben Lukas, who bulldozed out a 6-2, 6-0 win over Irene Javier, fifth seed Aileen Regan, who swamped Julie Ann Bonoy 6-0, 6-0, Alyssa Labay who subdued Hertz Bon Clag, 6-3, 4-6, 6-2, and Patricia Santos, a 6-2, 6-1 winner over Bonoy-Ann Sepulveda.

The other winners were sixth-seed Ma. de Castro, who beat Melody Ramaquian, 6-1, 6-2; Dinka Jacobe over Dolores Cabalza, 4-6, 6-0, 6-2; Trudy Anonuevo over Ivnan Adam, 6-1, 6-1; Michelle Pineda over Princess Nastasya, 6-2, 7-6; Eliflex Bulanga over Cristina Acuna, 6-0, 6-0; Irene Jacobson over Jeanne Cobden, 7-5, 6-1; Catherine Flores over Teresa Rose Cruz, 6-1, 6-0; Ma. Shirley Idlet over Joyce Reyes, 6-2, 6-2, and Filipinization Bernice De over Melissa Gomez, 7-6 (3), 7-5.

Projected to face Wahab Abbas, the event is sponsored by Columbian Lhuillier Dealers Holdings, Sun Village Resort, PAL Daily Inquirer, CEL, Jarin Lawrence, Stronghold Insurance, Coca-Cola, San Miguel Beer, TMS Ship, Philippine Star, Lao Salonga, MVOR, Jones, Mercury Steamship, Equitable PCI Bank, PM, Restaurant, Cognoscente, NAS and Burlington.

Arcilla, an intimidating force on the tennis scene, said she had stopped training for the national team and often and her tasted only when training for the SNAP.

"I could have played a lot better," said the dusky, 5-foot-8 tennis, who last year defeated compatriot Lalwy for the crown. "But my mind in the TFF has given me enough confidence here."

Arcilla only trailed the second round in singles and the semifinals in doubles of the event (TT tourney. "I don't know what to expect. I haven't faced the former yet."

Lions blast UP, secure first Ang Liga finals berth

DEFENDING champion San Beda capped University of the Philippines, 5-8, Sunday to book the first finals slot in the 2004 Ang Liga football tournament at the Santo Tomas field.

Gigo Gatmo blasted home two goals while James Shwandegen, Vaughn Mendoza and Dan Dalumal scored one each for the Red Lions.

San Beda will face either the Santo Tomas Growling Tigers or the Far Eastern Tamaraws in the finals set this Saturday at the Philippine Field in Pasig.

Jason Tomas missed making the finals cut, right after booting in the RP Under-23 squad, 0-2, at the close of its elimination round shut last Saturday also at Philippine.

Kirk Mirabiz scored both goals for the Scorpionado as the Tigers, last year's losing finalists, lost grip of the top spot and allowed San Beda to reach the finals first.

It was the second straight loss in as many weeks for Santo Tomas and the Tigers could find themselves out of the title game if the Tamaraws win their last two outings, one against the University of the East Warriors.

2,000 entries make tough NB 25-K race

RECENTRATED in the New Balance Power ten-each today at the Magsay Madrigal Plaza in Intramuros Intramuros.

More than 2,000 runners have so far entered in the race to be flagged off this Saturday at the Intramuros Administrative Building.

Tess Imperio of the organizing Team Tri Pinoy says organizers expect the final list of participants to reach to around 2,500.

Backed by Asia Sports Express, Air New Zealand, G-Shock, Jade Fresh, Hidden Spring Mineral Water and Electronic Multi-Monitor, the race will start and finish on 30th Street at the Bonifacio Global City.

Cash prizes totaling P1,250,000 and P500,000 worth of gift certificates, trophies, medals and gift packages for participants are up for grabs as a total of P500,000 going to the winners of the participants 25-kilometer Power Race.

Aside from the attractive prizes, the winners get the chance to represent New Balance Philippines in the Queenstown, New Zealand, marathon and road race.

Singlets and race packets will be issued to the Greenhills center while race packets and singlets of those who registered in New Balance outlets will be available for pick-up starting today.

Entry fees for the 5K run is P300, 10K P550 and the 25K/Power Race P250.

Technical supervision will be provided by Race hosted by veteran organizer Rudy Macadeo.

Manila Ladies Cup tees off at WW

ADJO Perlas

JOVIE Agojo aims to line up her shots as the country's top female golfer when she leads a star-studded field in the Manila Ladies Cup which opens off the tee-up today at Wack Wack's west course.

After an impressive tie for 16th in the recent World Amateur which crowning the RP squad to a share of 15th place in the team competition, Agojo will be a marked player in the championship. Joining the ladies honors Lara Roberts, Anna Tampinco and former RP Ladies Open champion Estrellita Villaraman.

The three-day, 300-player event, organized by the Manila Lady Golfers Association, inc. is actually a five-in-one tournament with those playing for three days to be classified in the Championship, and classes A, B and C.

Proceeds of the event will benefit Kythe Foundation, whose mission is to provide psycho-social support to pediatric cancer patients and their families, and the Manila-Jaycees Convalescent for Women.

Those playing only 36 holes will be classified into Classes A, B and C and senior division. Ms ladies can form a team for the team play competition with their scores in the last two days to be counted.

Joining Agojo, Roberts, Tampinco and Villaraman in the championship class are Tessy Lucero, Lina de Guzman, Aileen Yeo, Rhea Salvios and Divina Belmonte, youngest winner of honors on island team main.

Last year's champion, Heidi Chua, is set to play as guest along with Cornelio chair and Wack Wack president Benjamin Medes.

SLCUAA CAGING

Perpetual, PCU stay unbeaten

PERPETUAL COLLEGES and Philippine Christian University-Dasmariñas remained unbeaten in the 5th Southern Luzon Colleges and Universities Athletic Association (SLCUAA) basketball tournament held in separate venues recently.

The Altar of Columbia stormed to their third straight win and grabbed the lead in the men's division following a 66-58 victory over their Molino counterparts. Perpetual-Molino, which played host to Columbia since arrived, took a second straight loss in the tournament.

It was the same story in the women's side with the Perpetual-Columbia cagebelles winning over the Molino subs, 49-40.

PCU-Dasmariñas captured its second straight win with a massive 77-29 drubbing of the AMA Computer College-Silang squad at the St. Peters of Assisi College Sports Regional gym.

Meanwhile, the Lyceum of St. Francis of Assisi won their third straight victory and seized the lead in the boys' division following an 83-63 crushing of PCU-Dasmariñas, while Perpetual-Molino escaped past St. Joseph Academy 68-66, for its second win in three starts.

In the girls' division, Colegio San Agustin-de Bacoor de Perpetual-Molino, 35-26.

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OFW remittances surged 22.6% in Sept.

By Doris C. Dumlao

DOLLARS sent home by overseas Filipino workers surged by 22.6 percent in September to $735 million from a year ago, unwinding a four-month surge on the Christmas season dataset seen.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported that for the same month period, OFW remittances had reached $6.2 billion, or 9.4 percent better than the $5.7 billion in inflows a year ago.

"Given the trend and the reported strength of OFW remittances during the last quarter of the year, the projected 6 percent growth for the whole of 2004 is likely to be exceeded," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said.

Early this year, the BSP projected only a 2 percent full-year expansion in OFW remittances, considering stiff competition from workers originating from other developing countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. But the deployment of more workers and the more attractive peso-dollar exchange rate increased the flow of remittances, prompting an upward revision to 6 percent.

The sustained growth in remittances in September, from the year-high $7.21-percent jump in August, was attributed to the higher deployment of both land and sea-based workers.

Buenaventura noted that deployment of land-based workers—comprising largely of higher-paid professionals and technical workers, service staff and skilled production workers—rose by 3.1 percent to 121,000 during the first nine months of the year from last year while sea-based workers who went abroad increased by 2.7 percent to 360,000 in the same period.

Most of the migrating workers went to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, Japan and Italy. In terms of volume of remittances, the biggest amounts were the United States, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom.

"The huge potential of the remittances market from Filipinos working abroad urged local commercial banks in recent months to establish correspondent relationships with new overseas banks and money transfer companies," Buenaventura said.

"This has helped contribute to the observed increase in fund transfers from the US, Singapore, Hong Kong, Italy and the Middle East," Buenaventura said.

Through the years, the Philippines has been relying on huge remittances from OFWs to boost domestic consumption. In 2003, OFW remittances pumped $7.64 billion into the domestic economy.

Overall, OFW remittances now account for almost 11 percent of the country's gross domestic product and 16 percent of the current account surplus.

Inflow from OFWs is also significant because of its 100-percent value added unlike the country's top merchandise exports—semiconductors and garments—which have a high import content.

VAT exemptions cost gov't P227.4B

By Michelle V Rene

FORGONE government revenues from the value-added tax (VAT) created by various incentives laws amounted to P227.4 billion in 2003.

This made the VAT account for the biggest revenue opportunity loss for the fiscally troubled government, which now intends to reconsider the fiscal incentives available in the country to address some revenue collection.

Documents submitted to Congress showed that of the total VAT incentives given last year, those granted by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) under RA 7916 accounted for P100.5 billion.

VAT exemptions granted by the Board of Investments (BOI) under RA 369 and 7918 amounted to P427 million, while the rest were given out through several special incentives laws, including those that covered duty products, cooperatives and labor unions.

The documents also showed that following Peza, the second-biggest revenue loss came in the form of duty exemptions, which amounted to P56 billion. Duty-free privileges granted to Peza registered firms stood at P52 billion, while those given to BOI registered businesses reached P358 million.

(BOI 5A)

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Ecozone exports up 25.8% in first 9 months

By Roland W. Domingo

ECONOMIC zone locators posted a 25.8-percent jump in export receipts in the first nine months of the year.

From $19.3 billion last year, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) said economic exports from January to September this year rose to $24.3 billion.

Peza, however, said the four government-run economic zones showed flat growth, with exports this year hitting $5.06 billion, or almost the same as last year's level.

Bagobo City Economic Zone dropped out $2.33 billion worth of products; Cavite Economic Zone, $1.55 billion; Mactan Economic Zone, $1.38 billion, and Basilan Economic Zone, $221 million.

Of the public economic zones, Basilan posted the biggest increase in exports at 9.6 percent from $282.3 million in the first three quarters last year.

But Bagobo, which was actually the best performer among the public economic zones, reported a 7.4-percent decline in export receipts from last year's $2.3 billion, bearing out the gains made by Basilan.

Private or special economic zones (SEZ) shipped out a total of $19.12 billion worth of products in January to September this year, up 28.6 percent from $14.8 billion last year.

The top five SEZ exporters were Laguna Technopark Inc. with $5.93 billion; Cavitex Business Park, $3.46 billion; Subic Technology, $3.02; $1.72 billion; Laguna International Industrial Park, $1.31 billion, and Gemstech Industrial Park, $1,976.3 million.

Laguna International posted the biggest increase of 917 percent from $152.7 million in the first nine months of 2003, while top SEZ exporter Laguna Technopark reported a growth rate of 6.3 percent.

Information technology parks and buildings posted a total of $123.5 million in export receipts – an increase of 31.8 percent from $89.5 million last year.

The top five IT buildings and parks in terms of rent dependent were: BCBC Place Information, $16.6 million; Eastwood City Cyber Park, $15.6 million; Pacific Information Technology, $13.8 million; PBCom Tower, $9.8 million, and E-Square Information Technology, $7.4 million.

Also, total employment in the economic zone rose 11.2 percent, with almost 399,000 hired. Directly and about 598,000 employed indirectly.

The top three employers during the period were Cavite economic with 73,545 jobs; Laguna Technopark Inc., 62,765; and Phoenix-seaonic, 42,671.

Peza said total new and additional economic investments in the first 10 months jumped 60 percent to $55.6 billion, from $22.2 billion in the same period last year.

The cost of approved investments in the first 10 months surpassed that for the entire 2003, which was $28.4 billion.

Congress urged to approve bill on renewable energy

By Abigail L. Ho

THE MULTISECTORAL Renewable Energy Coalition is pushing for the enactment of the Renewable Energy Bill, which seeks to encourage investments in the renewable energy sector and promote the use of this type of energy. "This measure is very important at this time because the price of oil is quite high and we don't know by how long it will remain at this high," coalition chair Miguel Almeda said in a statement.

Almeda said it was important to develop local resources to minimize importation of oil and enable the country to save foreign exchange.

The coalition is composed of representatives from three main sectors—the government, private sector and non-government organizations. Its members include officials of the Department of Energy, the Confederation of Renewable Energy Sources (Core), World-wide Fund for Nature-Philippines (WWF-Philippines) and the NGO Coalition for Renewable Energy and Sustainability (Pacers).

The group met last Nov. 10 with lawmakers Senator Juan Flavier, Congressman and House Committee on Energy Chair and Renewable Energy Bill author Angelo De la Rudelles regarding the pending bill.

The bill provides attractive fiscal incentives, including a zero value-added tax (VAT) for renewable energy projects.

The bill likewise pushes for the opening of the energy grid to all renewable energy sources, as well as the provision of a price-to-dispatch arrangement for wind power and other intermittent power sources.

NEW BCDA PRESIDENT
Former AFP Chief of Staff and retired General Narciso L. Abaya (left) takes his oath of office as the new president of the Bases Conversion Development Authority. Administering the oath is Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita (right).

GSIS, SSS condition worries World Bank

By Dora C. Dumlao

THE WORLD Bank is worried over the slow implementation of reforms in the Philippine pension system, a development that could add to its members. This, it said, could be fiscal "susceptible to adverse developments that could affect its returns and long-term sustainability."

It also noted the slowly raised by the GSIS, itself, over the accumulated social insurance premiums of employees of various government agencies. The GSIS said its receivables from these agencies had put pressure on its financial position.

The GSIS said it also had some P1.6 billion in receivables from the national government. It said it was open to accepting nearly 10,000 hectares of government land to Clark, Pampanga in payment for the national government's obligations.

The World Bank report noted that while the Social Security System finally posted a surplus for the first time in several years last year, which was largely due to a one-percentage-point increase in the contribution rate imposed by law, its fund was still seen to be depleted by 2015 unless remedial measures were put in place.

A surplus by the SSS, the largest pension fund serving private sector employees, means that members may receive higher benefits when they retire or become eligible for benefits from the SSS longer.

The insertion of a provision for minimum pension in the 1997 SSS charter, without the benefit of actuarial analysis; and,

across-the-board pension increases of 30-20 percent declared by Congress between 1980 and 2000, often announced on Labor Day (May 1) or on the SSS anniversary day (Sept. 1), without counterpart increase in contributions.

Meralco seen posting P2.5B in profit in '04

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

POWER distributor Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) is expected to post record net earnings of more than P2.5 billion this year, analysts project said.

This is on the back of energy sales growth of 4.2 percent from January to October, which was higher than the growth of 3.8 percent in the first nine months. Industrial and commercial power sales registered the biggest growth.

However, reports said that a rate increase that took effect this month may dampen power consumption.

Meralco had said that its over four million customers in Metro Manila and nearby provinces would pay more for electricity starting this month because of National Power Corp.'s (Napocor) universal rate increase.

Starting this month, Meralco's rates go up 38 percent, to almost P1.08 per kilowatt hour, to reflect the increase in Napocor charges.

The increase, which is for October, Meralco's rate will go up to P4.52.

The IBC granted Napocor in September to average generation rate increase of 9% centavos per kWh to help reduce its losses.

Meralco reported a January-September net income of P2.240 billion, up 250 percent from P640.1 million in the same period last year.

It said in July-September period it was P831.8 million, up 45 percent from P574 million in the same months last year.

Sales volume in the third quarter rose 3.8 percent past on year.

Sales to residential customers grew 5.6 percent year-on-year to 2,276 gigawatt-hours, Meralco said in a report to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The opening of several new malls heightened electricity demand during the period, it said.

Sales to commercial users grew 1.7 percent to 3,250 gigawatt-hours, and sales to industrial clients grew 4.3 percent to 1,852 gigawatt-hours.

Overall, revenue in the third quarter rose up 10.3 percent to P36.5 billion from P33.1 billion in the same period last year, Meralco said.

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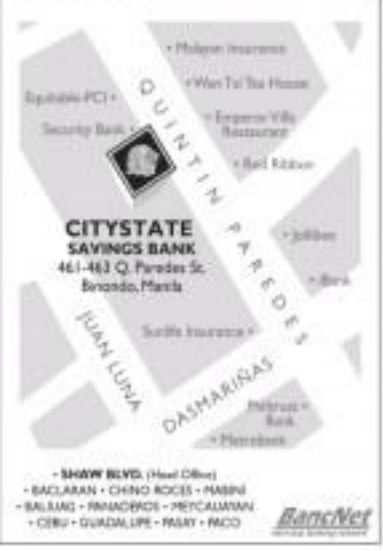

SLEX rehab gets $130-M commitment from IFC

By Clarissa S. Balino

PCIBank affiliate International Finance Corp. has committed to invest and lend about $130 million to the South Luzon Expressway rehabilitation project of Hopewell Group in Bacoor, Cavite.

Hopewell Group president Joel Balbarin said that First Metro Investment Corp. of the Metrobank Group had also expressed interest to invest P1 billion in the SLEX upgrade.

Balbarin said IFC's Manila office was working on a tentative structure of a $90-million quasi-equity investment and a loan syndication of $130 million. The IFC is the investment and lending arm of the World Bank.

Balbarin said the consortium would need about P10 billion to rehabilitate and upgrade the SLEX, which is about 200,000 motorists and about 60 percent of Luzon's produce pass through daily.

"We want a long-term loan of 12 to 15 years, whether in dollars or in pesos. But preferably in the local currency to minimize foreign exchange risks," the former finance undersecretary said in an interview.

Hopewell Group and its financial advisor Ernst & Young have also discussed possible loans from the Asian Development Bank (ADB-AMBC), and Bill Bank.

Also being explored are credit enhancements with the Philippine Export-Import Credit Agency or PhilEXIM, Coface of France, and Cesce of Spain, according to Balbarin.

IFC senior manager Antonio Weiss, who is based in Washington D.C., said the group was interested in the SLEX upgrade but "subject to its economic and financial viability, to meeting of environmental standards, sufficient support of all parties involved in the project and a shareholders' structure acceptable to IFC."

Balbarin said the IFC's expression of support for the project was sent to Nilo said to Northwest Development and Acquisitions Corp. chief executive Daniel Bernardino Arnaldo. The letter came from said Australia senior investments officer of the Administrator Department of IFC in MFC Capital's managing director Assad Khalid.

Hopewell Group owns 40 percent of South Luzon Tollway Corp., a joint venture with Philippine National Construction Corp.

The group of Lucio Co through Crown Equities Inc. said it own 99 percent of Hopewell Group, but sold nearly this year 60 percent of its stake to Northwest Development, a company backed by foreign Filipino investors who would rather remain passive, Balbarin said.

Northwest Development is in negotiations with MFC Capital of Malaysia and Eglo of France for their entry into the consortium as strategic partners.

Balbarin said the group was also evaluating joint venture proposals from other groups like Canada's SNC Lavalin, Leighton of Australia, Cartesa and Ono of Spain, Dumez of the United States, ICEM of France and Interunder of Switzerland.

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Crude rates ease to $47/barrel

SINGAPORE—Crude futures sank below US$47 per barrel Monday in light trade as traders looked toward another expected build-up in US crude stocks, shrugging off unabated attacks on oil fields in Iraq and a looming strike in Nigeria's largest exporter Nigeria.

Light, sweet for December in New York Mercantile Exchange was at US$46.93 per barrel mid-afternoon Monday in Asian after-hours electronic trade, falling 59 cents from its Friday closing.

The price was more than US$8 per barrel lower than its record close of US$55.17, which was reached earlier last last month.

"Crude inventories have now returned to comfortable levels after being depleted by Hurricane Ivan," said Sucden's Matt Hopwood in comments sent.

Commercially available crude supplies rose in 291.8 million barrels, the US Energy Department said last week, and the agency's mid-levels of stocks has been a major driving force for the downward price shift in recent weeks. Supplies are likely to rise again this week, traders said.

Output has been restoring in the Gulf of Mexico, where daily production is still about 32 percent below normal levels but significantly high-er than a month ago when oil companies struggled with the damaging after-effects from Hurricane Ivan.

Traders have been looking at the crude levels, and largely ignoring distiller stocks, which have fallen for eight straight weeks, ahead of the Northern Hemisphere winter.

Distillates—including kerosene, heating oil, jet fuel and diesel—increase premiums as the time of year at the onset of winter while added pressure is put on jet fuel because of increased flights during the Christmas holidays.

Lower distillate stocks have also been recorded in Western Europe and Japan.

"The strength in the market is the near-term should come from heating oil, where inventories are less than adequate and demand could keep it very firm," Hopwood said. "To make up for the loss distillate stocks, refiners could seem be asking for more crude... refined and if sold rounder here."

Crude oil levels are roughly the same from a year ago while heating oil stocks are down 12 percent from 2003.

In Asia on Monday, heating oil traded at US$1.3190 per gallon (3.8 liters) on the Nymex, a tad down from Friday's close.

"While crude prices are still about 60 percent higher than a year ago, they would have to reach US$60 per barrel to ease the inflation-adjusted peak set in 1980."

Markets have been tense for months due to the world's limited excess production capacity, now only around 1 percent above the daily consumption of 82.4 million barrels, leaving little room to maneuver in the event of a production interruption.

In Iraq on Sunday, saboteurs set fire to four northern oil wells north of Kirkuk. Oil officials said production has been affected but it is not immediately clear whether all four those wells are meant for export.

Iraq's oil production has been the target of repeated attacks by insurgents in recent months.

Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo late last week attempted to quell a mounting strike set for Tuesday. Obasanjo has ordered the price of kerosene be reduced ahead of the strike, planned in protest against rising domestic fuel prices.

Unions have vowed to press on with the strike and have also said they would target exports from the oil-rich Niger Delta, which pumps over 2 million barrels daily.

Meanwhile, the China Logistics Information Center said Monday the country's crude oil imports rose 2.2 percent in October from a year ago to 14.74 million metric tons (13.8.21 short tons), reflecting the country's increasing demand for petroleum products.

It said crude processed in the January-October period was up 14.4 percent on-year at 235.06 million metric tons (247.56 short tons).

China is the world's second largest consumer of crude after the United States. AP

China effort to cool economy seen to work

BEIJING—China's red hot economy has so far avoided a hard landing, suggesting that measures taken to cool growth are working, the state press on Monday cited China's central bank chief Zhou Xiaochuan as saying.

"China's economy is growing rapidly and the economy has not seen a 'hard landing,'" the China Securities Journal quoted Zhou as saying.

Currently, various indicators of Chinese monetary policies have reached normal levels," Zhou said.

Last week, M2, the broad measure of money supply, rose 13.9 percent.

This was 0.4 percentage points slower than in September and well within Beijing's target of 17 percent for the year.

Falling corporate deposits were a major factor behind the slowing of money supply growth, leaving banks with less money to lend, the central bank has said.

Meanwhile, the October consumer price index (CPI) rose up 4.3 percent compared with a year earlier after an increase of 5.3 percent in September and 5.3 percent in both August and July.

Zhou also reiterated that China's policy towards the yuan's value remains unchanged. "Basically stable is its value at a reasonable and balanced level."

He added that the country would continue to work towards a market based exchange rate.

China has promised to gradually liberalize its control over its politically-sensitive currency, but stressed it needs to make further preparations and has given no timetable. AFP

BLOWING IN THE WIND This 1.2-megawatt wind turbine from Denmark is capable of producing enough clean energy to power a small community. The Saint-Flavien Company's developing wind farms using such wind turbines in Magrea and Caba-Solar (c) maintains a 24-hour communication link through 724-4612 and 726-4222 (Photo: Monday) and (222) 339-4360 (Note: City).

Wall St. gains drive up Asia stocks

SINGAPORE—Persistent concern about the US trade deficit pushed the dollar to a 7-month low against the yen and a 1-year low against the Euro in Europe were on Monday, while strength on Wall Street drove Asian shares higher.

The dollar, within sight of a record low versus the euro, also suffered from speculation that Washington was happy to see it weaken.

Buying binks and exporter stocks lifted Japan's Nikkei average 1.88 percent to 11,107.57, a five-week closing high.

"I think a change in the global money flow is behind the gains in a handful of top Japanese exporters," said Koji Morotoda, head of domestic index trading at HSBC Securities in Tokyo.

MSCI's World Index of stocks rose 9.33 percent to a more than three-year high. The Asia Stocks ex-Japan index rose 0.76 percent to its highest since April 2000, led by a 1.99 percent rise in the region's IT component.

The dollar's slide gathered speed on Friday after the US retail bank released notes from its September meeting showing it was worried about a yawning current account deficit.

Those concerns outweighed a better-than-expected University of Michigan consumer sentiment survey, and provided fuel for bears.

Markets are now bracing for US net capital flows data for September, to be issued by the Treasury Department on Tuesday.

In August, net inflows totaled $80 billion. Richard Franulovich, senior currency strategist at Westpac Bank in New York, forecasts net inflows of $50 billion in September.

"Given similarly mixed trade debates, that would leave us bullish whatsoever in the event of a negative shock, or from a strategy perspective, such risks suggest the US dollar should be marked lower," Franulovich said in a report.

The dollar fell as far as around 105.15 yen, its lowest since mid-April, in Asian trade.

In late trade the South Korean won rose to 1,093.8 per dollar, its highest since late 1997.

Japanese government bond (JGB) prices were slightly lower, depressed by the stock market's gains.

An auction of 50-year JGBs by the Ministry of Finance, set for Tuesday, also weighed on investors' desire to buying aggressively, traders said. The key JGB 10-year futures contract was down 0.11 point at 138.38.

Hong Kong shares had risen 1.1 percent by midday and shares in Taiwan clipped 0.10 percent on late profit taking. Most Southeast Asian markets, such as Singapore, were closed for a holiday. Reuters

Number of Japan bankrupt firms drop

TOKYO—The number of Japanese firms that were under in October was the lowest for any month this year at 1,864, falling from a year earlier for the 22nd straight month on the back of sweeping economic growth, research showed on Monday.

The number of corporate bankruptcies in October fell 23.3 percent, while the total debt of companies that went bankrupt dropped 39 percent from a year before to still 4 billion yen ($6.46 billion), according to Tokyo Shoko Research.

A gradually improving outlook for Japan's economy is limiting the strength to its long-beleaguered corporate sector, extending from a decade of stagnation following the bubble period of the 1980s.

The trend of sliding corporate bankruptcies is set to continue, despite data showing the modest recovery is threatening to come undone due to a slowdown in global demand that has dampened the country's exports, economists say.

"The number of bankruptcies will likely continue to decline in the near-few months," said Masaru Yamamoto, chief economist at Barclays Capital in Japan. "I believe the economy will again show it is undergoing a sustained recovery."

But Yoshiko pessimistic that the declining trend in bankruptcies as government help and said risk factors continued to haunt prospects for a full-fledged corporate recovery.

"We still have to cautiously watch the growing risks that may trigger bankruptcies, such as slowing economic growth in the United States and China, the impact on exports from the strong yen, and increased oil and raw material prices," it said in a statement.

Japan's gross domestic product grew 0.1 percent in July to September from the previous quarter in real terms, government data showed last week. That marked the sixth straight quarter of expansion but was weaker than the 0.5 percent expected by economists.

Higher oil prices have hurt oil demand, making fears exports could soon peak and adding to the growing burden of a strength-ening yen.

But private-sector consumption—accounting for about 55 percent of Japan's economy—has proven to be a major growth pil-lar, rising 0.9 percent in July to September and outpacing forecasts of a 0.6 percent gain.

On a monthly basis, the number of bankruptcy cases in December fell 6 percent from September's levels, but the total debt of firms that went under jumped 65 percent.

Sectors registering declines in the number of bankruptcies for 22 straight months included construction, which logged a 22 percent fall from a year earlier.

Six listed firms went bankrupt in October, the first time in nine months, Tokyoku said.

Despite signs pointing to improving health, Tokyoku said the corporate sector could rapidly deteriorate into a situation of havoc, and have-nots.

"The interconnectivity has indeed been recovering, but the gap between well-performing companies and badly performing firms is widening, creating polar-ization," it said. Reuters

VAT exemptions . . .

Duty exemptions were also granted under several other special laws such as those that created the Subic Special Economic Zone, the Jewelry Development Act (RA 8522), the Philippine Investment Act (EO 226), the Philippine National Red Cross Law (PD 1264), and Radio Stations Law (EO 1546), among others.

The third-biggest source of revenue losses last year came in the form of income tax holidays and exemptions, which reached P45.45 billion.

The government's revenue opportunity loss from excise tax was at P27 billion; capital gains tax, P3 billion; withholding tax, P5 billion; donation tax, P46 million, and percentage tax, P3 million.

The latest total amount of forgone revenues last year was P340 billion. The figure was an update from the earlier P329 billion, which included estimates. The latest figures from the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

The huge amount of revenue losses from investment was the reason the Arroyo administration is pushing for the reconstitution of the country's investment laws.

BSP expects banks to dispose of ₱100B worth of bad assets

By Doris C. Dumlao

EUGENIO NTUBA

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas expects the local banking system to unload 19.06 billion worth of bad assets using the Special Purpose Vehicle framework this year.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the original target for this year was only ₱40 billion.

"We expect the banks to exceed the target," he said.

This year's increased target, however, was only about 20 percent of the banking industry's total non-performing assets worth P101.26 billion as of August.

The SPVs—composed of non-performing loans and real and other properties owned and acquired (Ropoas)—were expected to 12.3 percent of the banking sector's total assets.

Buenaventura said the BSP was expected to conduct a dialogue on the SPV framework by next year.

The SPV Law—which was passed in December 2003 and took effect in 2004—intends to help banks dispose of their non-performing assets by transferring them to special purpose vehicles specifically created for the sale of bonds.

The law removed the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and e-VAT (expanded value-added tax), and reduced the transfer fees by 50 percent.

However, to enjoy these incentives, the sale or transfer of the assets should be completed by April 14 next year.

As of the Sept. 14 deadline to register SPEs with the Securities and Exchange Commission, 36 met the deadline.

The latest deal structured under the SPV mode was that of state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines. LandBank sold P13.5 billion worth of NPAs to Deutsche Bank-Cargill Financial Services International Inc. and JP Morgan.

The sale will allow LandBank to trim its NPL ratio to about 8 percent, from 14 percent, of total portfolio.

United Coconut Planters Bank has also forged a deal to sell P13.6 billion worth of idle properties to a unit of Korean investment management firm Shinhan NBA. The transaction is seen to shrug off by more than 10 percent the bank's load.

Medium-sized Philippine Bank of Communications recently sold P12.1 billion worth of NPAs to Oaktree Investments Corp.

DINNER with a princess /C2

LIFESTYLE

Lifestyle Editor: Chelo Barot-Fortuno

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY TEEN • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

Recognizing signs of overuse injury

SPORTS and exercise injuries generally fall under two categories.

Acute injury happens suddenly and dramatically, and chronic injury is the type that quietly sneaks up on you. An ankle sprain or an ACL tear is your in-an-important-knee liga-

ment is an acute injury. Tendonitis or inflammation of a tendon is a chronic problem.

Most exercise injuries are chronic, many of them caused by overuse of the muscle-or-joint.

You can have perfect form and technique when performing your sport or exercise, but if you do too much without enough time to recover or if you suddenly increase your time or intensity, you are develop an overuse injury.

WELL AND GOOD

Dixie Jhett

Repetitive microtrauma

Dr. Frank Jobe, author of "Within Normal" and head of the Kerlan Jobe Orthopedic Center, compares an overuse injury to cutting down a tree. "The tree would not fall during the first 99

PRINCESS Caroline, with Manila and Monte Carlo resident Dr. Stephen Zoelly, applauding the Philam Foundation Choir

PHILIPPINE Tatler's chest-thrusted ladies, Rosy Dee in a Gavin and Tina Orosa in a YSL gown

TALL beauty Louise Elizalde with her three-inch counterpart, Isaac Sarmiento

HEAD-TURNER Patricia Co-Unjieng in a striking gown by her fellow Ateneo designer, Pepito Albert

HONARO Batiste with Cebu socialite Amparito Lhuillier, society woman and Chevrolet Guatemala Malla Bidaca and her husband, tycoon Louis Bidaca, with hubby Cristino Batiste

DAZZLING Mutt Peters

A princess in Manille

JUDES Gascon says and, "Wow, Yah, Yah." Today I can say, she came, she saw, and she definitely conquered the country with her profound interest and care for the less fortunate and abandoned children of the nation.

Statuesque, elegant and attractively royal, Her Highness, Princess Caroline of Hanover, beamed into the grand ballrooms of the Shangri-La Makati to her most regal manner, escorted by Cosme Rivadeli's woman of style, the dazzling Mary Peters. Un-coquettish Manille's glitterati consolidation belonging in the elite social crowd in full attendance at Princess Caroline was led to her table.

The next big thing I noticed, palangana, was how many—and I mean a lot—were missing their heads to see who was the last dish served at the princess' table. They paid a cool million each for the privilege of nibbling elbows with the true blue blood. All this for a story very good cause, unnecessary.

And if you still don't know who dished out the couch cash, ask one of the major backers of big promises involved in the preparation for this important happening, like Madame Soames, head of the organizing committee, and investors Annie Elizalde, Raul Manotoc, Dido Wenceslao, Nicky Zuellig, and Dr. Antonio Periquet. They might just tell you, palangana.

HONORARY second to Monaco Princess Caroline is wife Rio Rivadeneza-Periquet Carolina.

SHANGRI-LA's Jo Marie Soto Lim with his classy wife, Cecily Manzana Z.

PHILIPPINE Ambassador to Italy Philippe Lhuillier and his wife, socialite Gladys Ongpin L.

Anyway, most thousands of words and photos have already been published on the Philam Foundation and Amach Philippines project, let's report it in the style and flavor.

Two of the most prominent women in society, both philanthropists and ladies extraordinaire, Chito Madrigal-Collantes and, I was told, was not feeling too well (but naughty whispers came my way) on the said evening but did not grace the event, except Time or Shin, let's know if it was I, and also a glam blinkly Lagerfeldian by many socialites, intriguing women, whether true or false.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maverice Arcambe

Photos by Alberto Yan Hogen and Kendrik Miaz

Here and Ben Abbot were on hand, we were told, as were Ailene Augusto and Linda T., and Fernandez and Mr. Jaime! But we must not forget that Ben T. was super supportive of what happening, being the dedicated man particularly for the less privileged that she is. Better, she bought three tables during the fundraising, which her other dedicated friends occupied.

The following day Ailene and Ben hosted an exclusive lunch for some choice guests of the royals Hanover for the princess. Dr. Danny Vasquez and his wife Ising Madrigal attended the per-show cocktails at Bed for her Royal Highness and dashed off elsewhere afterwards.

Today's action has Mega, Manny Jimenez, former senator Loren Legarda, brilliant entrepreneur business entrepreneur Virgie Ramos, and Sen. Mike Hogsblom all opted for the birthday dinner party for Susan Ivanos and Ca. Subaru Manuel S. Shaw at the consistently excellent Il Circolo restaurant.

Ben Chan and interior diguet Miguel Pastor were in thought. Ambassador Bienvenido Tantoco was represented by daughter Shelly and Ram Santoso, palangana.

Acclaimed architect and interior designer Aaron Mendoza said, "I gave my instruction away and stayed home and worked instead!" I have no idea why either but sounded positive over all the chaos.

All I can say is her gam, whatever you're on, you named for! Enchanting event of the year.

Definitely the super head-turners and standouts in their glamorous gowns that night were statuesque beauty Amina Elizalde looking divine in a black top and tea length ball gown by Ivana Ayson; Patricia Co Unjieng in an aubergine gown with capes a-flowing by Sarah's couture; Louise Elizalde, Ivana Ayson, Isabel Maricris Sarmiento in a stunning Dolce Tavares terno; and Constantina Sison Tesda in tuxedo by Jesse. Patty Poppins was stunning in a dramatic black and white gown by Raul Gabriel Sta. Maria; beautiful Rachel "Che" Salgado looked radiant in her bright chocolate satin silhouette gown by Tracy Reyes.

The Lhuillier girls were all eye-catching. Ben Laurel Lim's lovely blush gown by Ge Clemente and long dangling diamond earrings for a dash of class, gorgeous Ariana Palanca L., a knockout in her low-cut gown by our very own Paulo Rivera, and her mother-in-law, Gilbert, top finalist on star, Amparito Lhuillier in fully beaded beige slim cut gown by her daughter's favorite designer, Los Angeles-based Monique Lhuillier.

Her daughters, the three very super charmers ambassador of Venice, Nicole Wijnol, was in a win chic metallic gray gown by Vera St. Laurent, lovely Venice Rosario Rebecca Osmeña was absolutely gorgeous in a gradient gown by Sonja Swenson, while Holy Concepcion Bachmann was wow! in her silky glamorous seamless silk taffeta ball gown by Jesse and attended and dictated another, stylish Tina Dominguez in eye-catching in a black short and her unpredictable gown by Vera St. Laurent, as Ana is the color for 2005, palangana. Actress, Cebu, Hong Kong and London socialite, Marguerite Cuneg, was gorgeous in a strapless lace organza ball gown, with dazzling earrings and necklace to match.

Princess Caroline was dressed in a simple black long gown by Karl Lagerfeld—not Chanel as others reported, dahlings.

Needless to say, everyone was thrilled to see the full 40-minute princess in person. Chanel-obsessed society matron Fortune Ongpauco, however, scored of Monaco, was scarred, wounded and wounded-hearted to finally meet Princess Caroline. She curtsied and kissed the princess' hand. The princess smiled, patted her up, and lubelles hand as they were photographed.

SOCIETY gang of Glenn Rye watching Shea de Venecia with a dancer Nina Lacap and sophisticated Marietta Montague

CIVIC-minded lady Ruby Ayson with schoolmates at a benefit for the Ivy Cross

DIVAS Jean Lopez with Gen. Benny Yan

BEAUTIFUL pals Rachel Bergson and Jean Subere

HIGHER of the matching committees Dr. Tony Periquet with Marietta Subere, head of three governing committees

LADIES of substance Jean Lichauco and Dido Garcia-Verzosa

THE RICH and the famous: Holy Concepcion-Huckabone, Her Royal Highness, Princess Caroline, Pinky del Rosario-Zobel, and business magnate and international Peruvian Pansy Hechavarria

OUR GANG of four: Harriett Annie Bagay, People Asia's Joanne Rae Ramirez, and Tina Gregory

Bulgari's tribute to PVA

Para palangana? Swimsuit-clad water nymphs put on your dancing shoes and get ready to partay.

Bulgari pays tribute to this year's Philippine Fashion Week with "Bulgari Bulgari Makes 2004". The grand event will be held at that local palace with action, The Peninsula Manila. The hotel's top Italian chef, Michele Mingrini, will prepare a multi-course Italian dinner with tons of Bulgari wines, palangana.

The exciting program of a fabulous night includes entertainment at the Peninsula Ballroom.

The grand finale point of the evening is a Miss Bulgari fashion for the other area around it sure to glamour events for you on the catwalk. Queen Mary L. courtesy of composer Ernani Pinlac-Cuenco, Inc., guitarist extraordinaire Gerard Salonga, Inc., guitarist extraordinaire Gerard Salonga, Inc., guitarist extraordinaire Gerard Salonga

Recognizing signs of overuse . . .

From page C1

blown but only after the 2000th. But the last strike did not cut the tree down. The final 99 strikes weakened it so much it fell on the 100th.

An Achilles tendon rupture (which can occur in badminton and tennis) may appear to happen in a split-second. Actually, the tendon was already weakened by "repetitive microtrauma" or micro-tears caused by overuse.

But is your body's way of telling you something is wrong. However, while the "signal" from a sprained ankle or ruptured knee is loud and clear, signs of overuse injury can be subtle.

It is always better to catch an injury early so it doesn't significantly hamper your game or exercise program.

Signs of overuse injury

One of the first signs of a potential overuse injury, according to Arbo, is soreness or stiffness. "That's because at night, your entire body's blood flow slows down ... especially the flow to the muscles and joints. During this time, it's easy for inflammation to build up. So when you wake up, any trouble spots will feel particularly stiff. Maybe once morning stiffness is transient, it's a good time to make more of trouble spots that might be susceptible to injury."

John lists other warning signals:

- Difficulty after a workout.
- Pain during a workout or while performing a particular exercise.
- Dull or sharp pain—pressing down on an area causes localized pain.
- Swelling.
- Instability.
- Snapping, cracking or crunching feelings or sounds emanating from within joints.

Exercisers or sports enthusiasts may be deceived about an overuse injury because, at first, the pain disappears when they work out or play their game. They think exercise "cures" their pain.

John warns that exercise can actually be making the problem worse. "Under stress, accumulations of pain may disappear during exercise, even though the damage is being compounded. Or it won't become evident for a while after exercise. During exercise, the overload increase in blood flow to the muscles and joints temporarily forces inflammation to subside.

"However, when you stop exercising and the blood flow slows down, the extra fluid slowly collects once again in the injured area, and eventually the pain returns, becoming quite pronounced."

Overuse syndrome

If you don't pay attention to warning signals and inflammation sets in, you can develop the overuse syndrome.

John explains, "The buildup of swelling and inflammation leads to pain and decreased blood flow. Pain around the muscles is tighter, which leads to further reduction in blood flow. That leads to more inflammation. It's a cycle that can be difficult to overcome."

Preventing overuse injuries

John lists three ways to prevent overuse injuries. Increase your exercise load gradually (frequency, time, intensity), warm-up properly, and allow sufficient recovery time between hard workouts.

Many experts also recommend cross-training to avoid using the same joints and muscles in the same way. By doing different types of workouts, you give your body time to recover and also spread out the stress so no one particular joint or muscle is taking the brunt of exercise.

Treating overuse injuries

The PRICE protocol mentioned last week is a good place to start. PRICE stands for protect, rest, ice, compress and elevate. Anti-inflammatory medicines are sometimes recommended by doctors to decrease pain and swelling. Always consult a doctor for appropriate medicine and dosage.

John adds, "To heal well you need fresh blood flow in and out of the injured site... fresh blood brings in oxygen and nutrients needed to build healthy tissue, and carries away waste products and excess fluid that have built up in the area."

Anything that increases blood flow reduces inflammation. John suggests heat, ice, ultrasound, massage and moderate exercise that does not create pain in the injured joint.

Movement after injury

John says, "It was once thought that injured joints should be completely immobilized until all swelling and inflammation subsided. That approach is no longer taken in the vast majority of injuries because immobility leads to weakness and atrophy of muscles. Injuries that heal while immobilized are also much more likely to form adhesions and irregular scar patterns that can result in permanently decreased ranges of motion."

I know the folly of not treating the joint at all while recovering. When a shoulder injury sent me first reeled in the early '90s, my aim was just to a sling for two weeks and I was not given any special rehab exercises. My injury kept recurring for the next 10 years until I met Dr. George Cardas, who made me do rotator cuff exercises.

My shoulder has been great ever since. I just have to pay close attention to early warning signals of pain when I try new exercises that can stress my shoulder.

* * *

The Association of Fitness Professionals of the Phils. will hold its National Fitness Convention Nov. 19-20. Call 8382952 or text 09175481202.

Fortified milk protects against pneumonia

THE WORLD'S first-ever large-scale clinical trial on fortified children's milk showed that milk fortified with a specific combination of nutrients can help protect against pneumonia and other acute respiratory infections (ARI).

The World Health Organization estimates that nearly 4 million deaths, including those of 1.9 million children, are caused by ARI each year.

The global research was conducted by a team of internationally known researchers led by child nutrition expert Dr. Saul Sazawal. It involved over 600 children who received milk supplements with and without Nutri-Cares over a 12-month period.

The milk used in the trial was Anchor 1+ with Nutri-Cares, a growing-up milk powder for children aged 1-4 and fortified with vitamins and minerals, including A, C, E, selenium, zinc and iron.

The study proved that milk with Nutri-Cares was more effective in preventing against ARIs compared to growing up milk powder without the enhancer.

FORTIFIED with the Anchor 1+ with Nutri-Cares is now clinically proven to reduce incidence of childhood pneumonia.

It was also found that children who drank Anchor 1+ with Nutri-Cares were less likely to go seven ddd.

New Zealand Milk, makers of Anchor 1+ with Nutri-Cares, supported the research.

FIND out your antioxidant level with the BioPhotonic Scanner. Manufactured by Pharmanex, an affiliate of Nu Skin Enterprises, it is a portable instrument used to measure human skin carotenoids and shows antioxidant levels. Antioxidants are substances that can neutralize highly active and damaging oxygen free radicals. Call 6896033 or visit www.nuskin.com.ph

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

All fours back leg lift

THIS exercise works the buttocks and hamstrings or back of the thighs.

Equipment:

Exercise mat. We can also use an ankle weight of 3-5 pounds.

Exercise technique:

1. There are two ways to do this exercise: On your hands and knees or on your forearms.

2. On your hands and knees:

- Keep your arms directly under your shoulders and your knees under your hip joints.
- Straighten one leg behind you with toes resting on the floor.
- Tighten abdominal muscles slightly.
- Contract your buttocks to lift the leg to hip level.
- Slowly return to starting position with toes touching the floor.

3. On your forearms:

- Follow the same technique but bring the leg higher than hip level.

Performance tips:

1. Keep the working leg straight.

2. Keep both hips and shoulders facing the floor.

3. Keep your spine neutral—neither rounded nor arched.

4. Keep your head in line with your spine. Do not hang your head down or arch your neck up.

5. Use the contraction in the buttocks to lift the leg rather than arching the leg up.

Some people feel dizzy when they do this exercise on their forearms. When this happens, do the exercise on your hands and knees.

Repetitions:

Do 1-3 sets of 8 reps per leg. The first set two sets.

All about haunted places and haunting

MANY questions are asked about haunted houses. Here are some of the most common:

How would you describe a haunted house or haunting?

Almost every house is inhabited by spirits of various types. Most of the time the spirits are invisible and quite harmless.

For example, spirits of departed relatives often visit the house where they used to live, or where they died. They do not necessarily manifest themselves.

Spirit guides and angelic creatures are also present in houses, as well as nature spirits or elemental.

It is only when spirits manifest themselves in some way that people say a house is haunted. Actually, there are always spirits around us. Our host of spirits makes us scared when they appear even if they don't mean any harm.

What are the signs that a place is haunted?

There are many different signs, but most manifestations are very subtle and need not cause worry. For example, you may smell sweet scents of flowers or perfume. That's not so bad. A deceased relative, friend or lover may just be saying hello. Or you may see a bright-colored moth or butterfly inside the house, although windows and doors are closed.

Sometimes, you may hear someone calling you or you may see mists or white shadows quickly passing by in the periphery of your eyes. There is nothing wrong when this happens.

When should you worry? When the manifestations begin to disturb the occupants of the house. For example, sounds of chairs or objects falling to the floor. Angry barking for no reason, lights turning on or off but not caused by blowouts, unusual loud noises or moans or cries, etc. These indicate the presence of an earthbound or disturbed spirit.

Why is it usually mentors and children experience haunting? Is it because ghosts perceive them to be weak?

No, not at all. Women and children experience haunting most of the time not because they are weak, but because they are more sensitive to such things than men. In essence and children, the right brain is usually dominant, whereas in men it is generally the left brain.

The right brain is responsible for non-verbal thinking, creativity, intuition and extra sensory perception (ESP). The left brain handles verbal and analytical thinking. If one is too analytical or logical, it is more difficult to go down to the alpha level of the brain waves where the two hemispheres of the brain become synchronized.

This does not mean men cannot experience haunting or communicate with the spirit. Many of them can too, in general, men have difficulty with this.

Why do ghosts and spirits continue to roam a place?

Aside from those already mentioned, spirits sometimes themselves or become restless because of attachment to a person, place or object, revenge, desire for justice, need to communicate an important message to loved ones, other unfinished business they may have with the living. Sometimes, they just want to say hello or tell their loved ones they are still around.

There are many reasons why spirits may not cha earth plane and cannot ascend or rise on higher planes. Sometimes they just don't know they are dead or, if they do, they refuse to accept their new state. So they cannot rise to a higher level in the spiritual world.

How should we deal with ghosts or spirits? What can we do to protect ourselves from evil ones?

First of all, we should find out what type of spirit is manifesting in a place. There are many types, such as elementals (disasters, ea ghosts, tupos, etc.), angelic creatures, spirit guides, spirits of dead relatives or close friends or extreme relations, thought forms, astral shells of departed people, time extraterrestrials have been manifesting themselves to people of late.

If the manifestations become heavy or scary, you may need professional help. One lo per Mind Development Institute has established what we call a Paranormal Investigation Group (PIG) that responds to requests for house-cleansing or clearing of negative spirits or energy, exorcism, healing, psychic-related ing or general paranormal consultation or a professional kind.

In other words, just like a doctor, lawyer or management consultant, we charge a reasonable fee for our services. Call 3137265 or 9926866.

INNER AWAKENESS

Andrew T. Lavarro

THE AWARD for Best Rejuvenation Program for Mandala Spa was received from Judy Chapman (second from left), editor in chief of Spa Asia, by (from left) Carmel Bayan, Philippine tourism attache in Singapore; Karen Reiss and Jose Dale Romero, president and spa manager, respectively, of Mandala Spa.

MICHAEL Loh, group publisher and editorial director of Spa Asia Media Pte Ltd., congratulates Perlo Ramos and Jennifer Sanvictores, president and sales and marketing manager, respectively, of the Farm at San Benito, which received awards for Best Retreat, Best Holistic Healing Program, and Best New Age Activity.

Philippines bags four Spa Asia Crystal awards

THE FARM at San Benito and Mandala Spa were best in four categories of the inaugural Spa Asia Crystal Awards in Singapore recently.

The Farm at San Benito, a two-year-old facility in Lipa, Batangas, was cited for Best Retreat, Best Holistic Healing Program and Best New Age Activity by the regional publication Spa Asia in the first-ever spa and wellness awards.

The Mandala Spa of Boracay, Aklan, received the award for Best Rejuvenation Program.

The Spa Asia Crystal Awards was organized to set gold standards for spas. Publisher Michael Loh said Spa Asia recognized the growing Asian health and lifestyle-conscious leadership and was keen to discover and learn more about the region's leading resorts, first retreats and unique therapies that are at par with those in the United States and Europe.

Judy Chapman, chief editor of the magazine, said it was a step in the right direction for a leading spa and wellness publication. Through it, the magazine sought to promote the finest destinations in an easy to understand manner like the Spa Asia Crystal Awards.

The awards was divided into 47 categories. Nominations from the magazine's more than 3,000 readers were made starting November 2003 and closed in June.

Finalists were reduced to 126.

HAUNTED and haunting /C4

LIFESTYLE

Your best wellness defense

"Look on the land where no one is old, it is nowhere but in yourself."—Rt. Reverend Dwapen

AT THIS very moment, your immune system is building up a strong defense against viruses, bacteria, fungi and other unwanted, unwelcome invaders. Like an army, a healthy immune system requires perfect synchronization and timing. At its peak, your body's defense system is strong, energized and fit.

Doing its job

Dr. Terry Phillips, PhD, director of the immunogenetics and immunodiagnostics laboratories at the George Washington University Medical Center in Washington, DC, says: "If the immune system is doing its job and you have good health, you don't even think about it. The best way to keep it that way is to do all the things that are going to keep it naturally strong like exercising, eating right and coping with stress as best as you can."

But as you age, the system does lose its efficiency and slowly weakens, making it less capable of destroying the enemy.

"We believe that loss of immune system function is related to the onset of cancer, as are immune diseases like rheumatoid arthritis and the frequency and severity of infectious diseases. At 55, pneumonia is a common foe at 70, it can be life-threatening," says Dr. Michael Orbach, adjunct professor, Boston University School of Medicine.

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

Keep the immune system strong through exercise, right diet and avoidance of stress

Good news, bad news

The bad news is that the immune system reaches its peak when you enter puberty. Although the dynamic database of immune-boosting T cell in the thymus starts withering away, T cell production continues but at a slower pace.

The good news is that, with a few dramatic lifestyle changes, you can jump-start the immune system.

Steps to boost your defenses:

- Lose the disease. A lack of rest or relaxation in one's life can lead to sickness. Stress depresses the system to avoid virus factors. Exercise, engage in prayerful meditation, listen to soothing music, visit a spa, be with happy people, watch television or a movie, etc.
- Sleep. When you sleep, your body undergoes repair. Studies show your immune system suffers if you do not get enough sleep. Get 6-8 hours of sleep at night.
- Stop smoking. Tobacco contains formaldehyde, a chemical that destroys your body's defense systems, making you susceptible to respiratory ailments. If you are a smoker, quit now.
- Exercise. Overall, it is one of the best ways to detoxify the body, ridding it of toxins. Walk, jog, swim, run, bike, dance for at least 30 minutes.
- Learn your "Alphabet." Get your vitamin A requirements through naturally rich foods—4,000 IU daily is the recommended dose. Eat sweet potato, carrots, spinach, broccoli, watermelon. Take beta-carotene supplements—9 mg daily. Get Vitamin B6 (1.6 mg daily) from bananas, fish, chicken, avocado, sunflower seeds, liver. Fortify yourself with 500-1,000 mg of C. Eat bell peppers, guava, oranges.

Take in some early morning sun for your vi-

TUESDAY /C2

Beauty pageant brings search to Cebu

THE SEARCH for Miss Hawaiian Tropic International-Philippines moves to Cebu after a successful launch in Manila. Candidates from the Visayas region will be presented on Nov. 20, 5 p.m., at the Pool-side of the Waterfront Hotel in Lahug.

Winning regional finalists will fly to Manila to compete for the Miss Hawaiian Tropic International Philippines 2005 title in March. The winner in the competition will represent the country in the Miss Hawaiian Tropic International Pageant in Las Vegas in April. She will be the first Philippine representative to participate in the Las Vegas pageant, considered the largest in the world as it is held in more than 1,000 locations in the United States and 60 other countries.

Miss Hawaiian Tropic is open to everyone regardless of religion, ethnicity and marital status. Even married women and mothers can compete as long as they embody the ideal 21st-century woman of beauty, grace, poise, physical health and a keen sense of independence.

The Miss Hawaiian Tropic International Philippines is being conducted by the Independent Talent and Entertainment Management Corp. (ITEM), exclusive franchise-holder in the Philippines of the Las Vegas-based pageant.

In the Visayas, auditions and screenings are held at Banwaets and Mary Events Management Co. in Jose Avila corner Rea Streets, Capitol Site, Cebu City. Call 161722 or 2481 5 or (63) 9209998465.

In the National Capital Region and Luzon, auditions and screenings are going on at the ITEM Corp. office, 907-A West Tektite Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange Building, Ortigas Center. Call the Miss Hawaiian Tropic hotlines (632) 6343901 and (632) 6314648 or visit the pageant website www.misshawaiiantropic.ph.com.

MISS Hawaiian Tropic International 2004 Ashley Smith of Jacksonville, Florida

Spa founder to open RP branches

THE NEW Murad Spa at the 7/F Rustan's Makati and Alabang, offers the latest scientific breakthroughs in skincare technology in a luxurious spa setting.

Among the services on the menu are various types of specialized treatments using clinically-proven formulas developed by world-renowned skincare authority Dr. Howard Murad, the spa's founder.

Dr. Murad will be in Manila Nov. 21-23 to open formally the Murad spa and to promote his latest best-selling book, "Wrinkle-Free Forever."

Winning recipes for 'healthy meat'

TUNA is the health aficionado's favorite meat. To drive home that point, Century Tuna held its annual Culinary Idea.

Dubbed "The Century Tuna Bowl," the contest yielded more original recipes to help spread the message: "Tuna is not tuna a week."

The seamless division had two categories: family meal (two-member family teams prepared a Century Tuna meal composed of a vegetable dish, rice topping, Oriental noodle or pasta, and cold appetizer with sauce) and junior meal (high school students, 13-16 years old, prepared Century Tuna recipe for bread topping or sandwiches).

Family meal winners were Jessy and Eleanor Ty (first prize), Lamb and Vivien Lagman (second prize), and Leonora Chavis and Ms. Lee Dupino (third prize).

Grand winner in the junior category was Irina Alejo from Siena College. Runners-up were Aimee Carlo from Christ and Patricia Kelly Parreno from Miriam College High School.

Hotel and restaurant management students competed in the student division, with each three-member team preparing an original Century Tuna buffet recipe for 18-21 persons. The buffet included two appetizers, with one sauce each; one salad with dressing; and one entrée or main dish, with two cooking or three garnishes, and one sauce.

Winners in the student division were the Centro for Culinary Arts composed of Frederick Custodio, Myra Thea Salao and student Jay Ambrosio (first prize); the University of Regina Carmeli composed of Melissa Cruz, Rosalie Joe Hernandez and Janice Vasquez (first runner-up); and Philippine Christian University of the Philippines composed of Vincent Frederick Arias, Beatrice Bernabad and Cornelia Bacalhaus (second runner-up).

WINNERS of the recently concluded Century Tuna Feast

Prizes included holiday packages to Boracay and Hong Kong.

Judges were chefs Humphrey Navarra, Miles Baron, Ariel Cosme, Mikaela Prats, Pilar Sevilla, Jill Sandique, Bert Francisco, Jane Paredes, Tirsan Reyano, Vicky Barrera, and Ernest Cuda. Sam de Leon was chair.

Gigi Angeles, Century Tuna Group's culinary directress, said this year the contest was "family-oriented." The company believed that a healthy family means a healthy community and country.

Your best wellness defense

Fromage GA

tamin D, drink a glass of non-fat D-fortified milk, eat tuna. Vitamin D is a powerful anti-infectant. Eat seeds, nuts, oils or take a 400 IU capsule daily (like Myra E, teas, 15 g of it, a t mess every day. Get it from clams, oysters, green leafy veggies.

■ Trim the fat in your diet. Eat more veggies and fruits, lessen the red meat.

■ A lack of magnesium may suppress the immune system and affect your heart. Take 200 mg daily. Eat more seafood, peanuts, veggies.

■ Selenium, a mineral, is now considered one of the most powerful antioxidants. Eat tuna, fish, shellfish, whole grain bread and cereals.

■ Zinc maximizes the system to good morning conditions. Eat nuts, milk, eggs. Don't take more than 60 mg supplements as it can depress the system.

■ Be a leader by practicing the art of forgiveness, reconciliation, cooperation and team work. A leader's attitude in life is power, not woe.

Beauty regimen

Mixed a small carrot. Wrap in a handy or towel and add cucumber base as a mild astringent and exfoliant. Its natural acids can soften the skin. Rinse and moisturize after.

Affirmation of the week:

"I am a healer. And all who come in contact with me are healed."

Love and light!

Reference: "Age Reasers for Women" by Prevention Magazine